

VEDANTA VINDICATED

— OR —

HARMONY OF VEDANTA AND CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

BY

Rev. J. F. PESSEIN



PRINTED BY
REV. BRO. JOSEPH S.J.,
AT THE 'ST. JOSEPH'S INDUSTRIAL SCHOOL PRESS,
TRICHINOPOLY :
(S. India.)
1925.

—

All Rights Reserved.

Price—Rs. 3, post free.

Sh. 5.

\$ 1.25.

To be had from the Author. .

Rev. J. F. PESSEIN,

Wellington (Nilgiris.)

S INDIAN

NIHIL OBSTAT,

M. VEYRET,

Censor Deputatus, Bangalore.

Imprimi potest :

+ M. DESPATURES,

Bishop of Mysore.

DEDICATED
TO THE MEMORY OF
SRI SANKARACHARYA

WHOSE TEACHING
IN SPITE OF HIS ERRONEOUS PSYCHOLOGY AND
HIS MYTHOLOGY BRINGS TO CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY
HIS PRECIOUS SUPPORT
FOR COMBATING MANY MODERN ERRORS.

With us he contends—

Against the materialists and atheists that the order of the universe postulates an intelligent Creator ; the fleeting and temporary, an immutable and eternal base.

Against the disciples of Hegel that truth and error are not synonymous.

Against the agnostics he upholds the objectivity of truth and our power of knowing it.

Against the subjectivists of all stamp he maintains the objective reality of the world, from which we derive our knowledge.

Against the pantheists he teaches that there is an infinite distance between the universe, and God, that they differ as much as light differs from darkness.

CONTENTS.

	PAGE
Introductory Chapter 	1
The Three Systems of Vedanta 	5
Adwaita 	7
Remarks for the right comprehension of Adwaita	9
The first principles of Adwaita 	11
Theory of Knowledge 	15
Maya (Illusion), the greatest riddle of Adwaita .	20
What is Maya 	29
Summarizing the doctrine of Maya 	51
The unreality of the world and Christian philo- sophers 	52½
The Adwaitins in search of God 	55
Is Brahman Unknowable ? 	63
Para Brahman is a personal God 	79
The Objections 	85
Brahman's Attributes 	92
Another way of defining God 	106
A third way of defining God/ 	110
God's Science, (subjective, a pure act, implies no composition.) 	111
Brahman is unrelated to anything 	119
Creation 	111
Nature of the evolution of the world from God ...	127
Atman 	129
Some apparent contradictions explained away ...	130
Brotherhood of man with nature 	133
Other instances of identity of language ...	137
Adwaita and Buddhism 	141
The errors of Adwaita come from religion ...	143
The possibilities of Adwaita 	147
Errors wrongly attributed to Adwaita ...	149
Vocabulary 	155
Bibliography 	156

VEDANTA VINDICATED.

INTRODUCTORY CHAPTER.

THE opinion every one has, both in India and in the West, concerning Vedanta, is that there is nothing in it common with Christian philosophy. What the Missionaries of India and the western Clergy think of it can be gauged by the following quotations:

“Vedanta is the greatest foe of Christianity.”—
(The appreciation of an English Missionary in the “*Is India Civilised?*” of Woodroffe.)

The French Review “*Etudes Religieuses*” of the year 1909 says: “You may rid Hinduism of its immense load of nonsenses and condense it into a sort of mystic positivism, yet it is an incredible illusion to pretend to find in it any thing of any use for us.”

All the tracts and books published in India by Missionaries hold the same language.

Lay scholars have equally misunderstood Vedanta. So did Max Muller, Thibaut, Deussen, etc.

There is in the West a considerable literature on Adwaita philosophy; and the appreciations widely differ.

The pantheists have extolled it because some took it to be idealistic pantheism, others materialistic Pantheism. Christian writers, on the contrary, for the very same reason, have for Adwaita nothing but scorn. They look upon it as a heap of nonsenses and the greatest foe of Christianity.

It is high time we should shake off the yoke, and reject the wholly arbitrary and artificial interpretation of Prof. Max Muller and Deussen, which we have so easily accepted as authoritative and final, and do justice to the Indian Wisdom.

Dissatisfied with the view of these scholars, I have spared no labour to get at the genuine teaching of Adwaita. I have sought light from the Indian Universities, from Indian modern works and reviews, etc. But no light has been available.

I have then discarded all intermediaries and went to the very sources, *viz.*, the works of Sankara, Anantagiri and Sureswaracharya.

I dare say that, after many years' study, I have been fortunate enough to discover the lost Wisdom of India. For I have found out that the universally accepted interpretation of Adwaita is sadly mistaken, and at the same time I have been able to ascertain its right doctrine. Such is my claim.

With the greatest pleasure I have found out that Adwaita (Psychology excepted), not only is not antagonistic to Catholic philosophy, but agrees wonderfully with it, in all the most fundamental matters. Not only it does not deserve the scorn

wherewith it is being looked upon by Missionaries, but is worthy of high admiration.

Adwaita, therefore, is neither a crude materialistic pantheism, nor idealistic pantheism, nor subjectivism, nor pragmatism. Concerning God, the universe and their mutual relations, it holds the same doctrine that Catholic philosophers do.

This booklet is the fruit of many years' study. I do not regret the labour. For I am fully convinced that it opens a new era for the Indian Thought. The gulf that seemed to separate Indian philosophy from the Christian Thought has been bridged over. A common splendid ground has been found wherein the Wisdom of the East and the Wisdom of the West can meet and shake hands. On account of their many common high merits and sublime doctrines, Vedanta and Christian philosophy must be considered as two twin sisters. The latter grew up stronger, healthier and purer thanks to a better atmosphère. It is her duty to stretch out a friendly hand to her noble sister of India, and lead her on to new conquests.

Are we to wonder if India, Greece, Rome, etc., agree in the fundamental principles of philosophy? No. The contrary should be an object of surprise.

One day conversing with a Hindu gentleman of Calcutta, I told him: You know, I am a keen student of Vedanta. He said: Yes?—And he remained feelingless like a statue. Of course he expected me to pass some unpleasant remarks.

But when I added: "And I am very glad to say that Adwaita is wonderfully deep and agrees on many important fundamental points with Christian philosophy", he felt quite happy and with manifest complacency he remarked that "it cannot be otherwise, the human intellect being the same all over the world, the difference of colour won't prevent us having the same logic."

Various are the reasons whereby Vedanta has been misunderstood.

First.—The want of men amongst modern Indians to explain it, for the Vedanta of Sankara is a sealed book for them. *Second.*—The lack of ex-professo treatises on Theodicy and Metaphysics. *Third.* The prejudices. *Fourth.*—The having blindly accepted as authoritative the opinion of authors of repute without verifying the sources. *Fifth.*—The want of proper preparation to such study on the part of many Westerners. The required preparation is a good knowledge of Catholic philosophy.



THE THREE SYSTEMS OF VEDANTA.

Three systems come under the name of Vedanta. The *Adwaita* (Monism), whose chief exponent is Sankaracharya who flourished in the IX century ;—the *Visishtadwaita* (qualified Monism) of Ramanuja, who lived in the XI century ;—and the *Dwaita* (Dualism) of Madhvacharya (XIII century).

ADWAITA :—

According to the *current interpretation*, the chief tenets of Adwaita are the following :

I. There is only one existence, Brahman ; the world is unreal, or if it exists, it is not distinct from Brahman.

II. Brahman is impersonal.

III. He is unconscious.

IV. He has no attributes,—He is *nirguna*.

V. The human soul (*jiva*) is identical with Brahman, is Brahman Himself. But on account of its connection with the senses and the body (*upadhis*) *jiva* does not realise that identity. At death only, being freed from the screen of the *upadhis*, it will realise that identity. Adwaita teaches also transmigration.

My interpretation.—I admit that Sankara holds the doctrine of the last item, but I will prove that there is no ground for attributing to

Sankara the errors of the other four items. Moreover I will show that his philosophy agrees in most points wonderfully with our Christian Scholastic, and that he, in the knowledge of God, rises often to those vertiginous metaphysical heights where soar supreme the Augustine, the Denis, the Thomas Aquinas, the Anselm.

VISISHTADWAITA :—

This system is summarized as follows.—There exist only one all-embracing being called Brahman. This Being is not destitute of attributes, but is rather endowed with all imaginable auspicious qualities. Intelligence is His chief attribute. Brahman or the Lord is all-pervading, all-powerful, all-knowing, all-merciful ; His nature is fundamentally antagonistic to all evil. The world and the souls are an emanation of Brahman. World and souls are real and form the body of Brahman. Whatever is presented to us in our ordinary experience, *viz.*, the material world and the souls, are essential real constituents of Brahman's nature. Matter and souls constitute, according to Ramanuja, the body of the Lord. The souls will keep their individual existence, or, better, a sort of individual existence, even when they will be united to God after death.—Such is the interpretation of Western scholars. I neither reject nor endorse it. For I suspect that Visishtadwaita has been misrepresented as is the case with Adwaita.

DWAITA :

This system holds that there are three absolutely distinct eternal sorts of beings: God, the souls, and

matter. Every human soul is quite distinct from every other soul. The human souls, when liberated from the bonds of *samsara* (series of rebirths), will find their utmost bliss in an inseparable union with God.

ADWAITA.

In this essay I will deal only with the Adwaita of Sankaracharya and of his immediate disciples Suresvaracharya, and Anantagiri. Occasionally I will quote also Sayana.

This system is much superior to the other two in Theodicy, in Cosmology, and in the relation between God and the world.

Though etymologically Adwaita means non-dual, this system is not pure Monism, for it does not exclude any sort of Dualism.

To understand properly Adwaita Monism, we must study in what atmosphere it developed, what were the doctrines which it was impugning.

We find that the opponents of Adwaita were the Vaiseshikas and the Sankyas, who were Dualists. The nature of their Dualism will give us the key for understanding the Monism of Sankara.

Now the Vaiseshikas and the Sankyas upheld the doctrine that there are two self-existent and independent principles, *viz.*, God and matter.

According to the former the eternal atoms, according to the latter the eternal pradhana, were

the primeval elements from which the world has evolved.

It is this kind of Dualism that the Adwaitins took to task ; and if they took the name of Adwaita for their system, it was only in view to reprove and reject that kind of Dualism, i.e., the admission of two self-existent principles, but not meaning thereby to teach that Brahman is the only existence.

In what does it then consist—the Monism of Sankara ?

He simply contends that *Brahman alone is self-existent* ; that the world exists also, but it owes its existence entirely to God, who constantly sustains it by His power and presence in it.

As I have said above, such doctrine is not Monism pure and simple, as the Monism of some Western pantheists. It is like our Catholic Dualism. Five centuries before Sankara the great Christian philosopher, the Pseudo-areopagite, taught the very same sort of Monism, i.e., unity in multiplicity.

It is therefore more correct to call Adwaita as well as our Christian system “mono-dualism”.

Great credit is due to Sankara and his school for having fought strenuously against the upholders of the self-existence of the material world, and brought the whole universe under the sway of God to whom it owes not only its organisation but also its very being. Sankara understood that the independent existence of another being would imply

limitation for God. If the material world didn't depend on God for its existence, a clod of earth could stare God in the face and say : I will not bow before Thee, for I don't owe Thee my being ; like Thee I am self-existent and eternal.

My explanation of Sankara's Adwaita is corroborated by some ancient Hindu writers.

“Some uphold the doctrines of Adwaita system, and some those of the Dwaita system. True philosophy is neither absolutely monistic nor absolutely dualistic, but is a combination of both.”—

(Kularnava Tatram.)

“Absolute Monism or Dualism is no good : a combination of both leads to the attainment of the greatest object.”

(Dakshasmriti.)

These two quotations show also that there were some philosophers who upheld the pure Monism, which is not Sankara's Adwaita, or that Adwaita's Monism being difficult to grasp, has been misunderstood.

REMARKS FOR

THE RIGHT COMPREHENSION OF ADWAITA.

I. Adwaita does not possess ex-professo treatises on the various parts of philosophy. Besides, its language is rather rudimentary, at least where it deals with certain parts of Metaphysics.

Consequently sometimes we must rather look for what the philosopher means than for what he says.

II. It is unfair to judge from detached passages, without making a thorough study of the various works of Adwaita.

III. When a truth has been found clearly stated, it is not to be given up on account of some other obscure or even contradictory passages. For obscure passages are to be explained by clear ones; the contrary course can neither reasonably nor fairly be adopted.

IV. Great confusion arises from the fact that the adwaitins often pass without transition from *apara vidya* to *para vidya*.

V. Material illustrations are not to be taken in all their aspects, but only in the one or more aspects the authors have in view.

VI. We must be slow to saddle with too many nonsenses philosophers who upheld so high metaphysical truths such as these:

God is pure Being, self-existent, immutable, an absolutely simple Essence; His attributes are not accidental qualities but His very essence, He is a pure act without any potency; His knowledge is independent and subjective; the created universe pre-existed in God's idea, etc.

VII. The Adwaita philosophers use sometimes paradoxical expressions that are not to be taken in the ordinary sense of the word. They contain

high truths for the initiated, but seem nonsensical to the man-in-the-street.

VIII. We must bear in mind that "*maya*" (illusion) is used in various senses.

IX. We must never forget that when Adwaita rejects the reality of the world, it has only in view that underived and independent reality which was upheld by the Vaiseshikas and the Sankyas.

X. The philosophic treatises of Adwaita consist mainly in commentaries on exceedingly obscure works, viz., the Upanishads, the Vedanta Sstras, and the Bhagavad Gita. I should compare these works to flashes of light in a dark sky, to a few lilies in the wild jungle, or to a handful of precious stones in a heap of earth. Wherefore we must not expect to find in their commentaries either the wonderful clearness or the artistic exposition of St. Thomas Aquinas.

THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF ADWAITA.

Sankara as well as Aristotle and all Catholic philosophers hold Philosophy to be a science, and as such, to rest on the solid ground of certain unshakable, self-evident and universal truths or axioms, which all men of sane mind admit. As the strength of a building depends on the solidity of its foundation, so the value of a system of philosophy can be judged by the principles on which it rests as on a base. A system is therefore worth what its foundation is worth and no more.

Sankara says that the non-admission of the first principles would lead to a baseless *regressus in infinitum*, what he calls the fallacy of *anavastha*. (Gita xii-2, Sutras ii. 2. 30). Without them indeed all reasoning, all science become impossible. For, unless we have a basis to build upon, no reasoning can have an end.

Let us see now which are these first principles, on which as on a solid ground are built Adwaita and Catholic philosophy.

- I. *The principle of evidence*, i.e., what is evident must be admitted as true.
- II. *The recognition of the subject of self: I am I*
- III. *The subject's power to know.*
- IV. *The principle of contradiction.*
- V. *The principle of identity.*
- VI. *The principle of causality or sufficient reason, that nothing can be without an adequate account for its existence.*

We will hear what Sankara has to say on each of these principles.

- I. *The principle of evidence.*

“Whenever (to add a general reflection) some thing perfectly well known from ordinary experience is not admitted by philosophers, they may indeed establish their own view and demolish the contrary opinion by means of words, but they thereby neither convince others nor themselves. (Sutras ii. 2. 25).

“We certainly cannot allow would-be philosophers to deny the truth of what is directly evident to themselves.” (Sutras ii. 2. 30).

See also—Gita, xviii. 48.—

II. *The recognition of the self: I am I.*—“The self is self-determined...without determining the self—I am I—none seeks to determine the knowable objects. Indeed the self is unknown to nobody.” (Gita ii. 18.)

“The existence of the witnessing self is self-proved and cannot therefore be denied.” (V. Sutras ii. 2. 30).

III. *The subject's power to know.*—This principle is implicitly admitted throughout Sankara's works.

IV. *The principle of contradiction,*—viz. the same thing cannot in the same sense be and not be, or the same thing cannot in the same sense be affirmed and denied.

Sankara says: “It is impossible that contradictory attributes such as being and non-being should at the same time belong to one and the same thing; just as observation teaches us that a thing cannot be hot and cold at the same moment.—Again: Nor is it logical to declare the categories to be indescribable. For if they are so they cannot be described; but as a matter of fact, they are described, so that to call them indescribable involves a contradiction.”

“And if you go on to say that the categories on being described are ascertained to be such and such, and at the same time are not ascertained to be such and such, and that the result of their being ascertained is perfect knowledge, or is not perfect knowledge, and that imperfect knowledge is the opposite of perfect knowledge or is not the opposite, you certainly talk more like a drunken or insane man than like a sober trustworthy person.” (V. Sūtras. ii. 2. 33). “Their being both (active and inactive) is impossible because self-contradictory.” (V. Sūtras. ii. 2. 14).

“To the one Brahman the two qualities of being subject to modification and of being free from it cannot both be ascribed.” (V. Sūtras. ii. 2.14).

V. *The principle of identity* :—*What is is.* It is only another way of putting the principle of contradiction.

“The definite is that object which is distinguished from all other classes of objects and from other objects of the same class, and known as existing at a particular time and a particular place; that which can be specially pointed out “This is this”.—Sankara—Tait. Up. 576.

VI. *The principle of causality or sufficient reason*,—that nothing can arise by chance, everything must have an adequate cause.

In his commentary on the Vedānta Sūtras, Sankara uses this principle victoriously against

the Sankyas, where he shows that the unintelligent *pradhana* cannot be the cause of the world because the wonderful order and the movement seen therein require an intelligent Architect and an intelligent Mover.

THEORY OF KNOWLEDGE.

In any system of philosophy the theory of knowledge is of equal fundamental importance as the First Principles. These two factors are indeed the two corner-stones on which a system can be built.

The theory of knowledge is a reply to the question: "How do you know it?" For Sankara as well as for Aristotle and for Catholic philosophers the theory of knowledge rests entirely on the admission that the reality of the exterior world is a self-evident fact. Between the realism of these philosophers and the subjectivism of the Buddhists and of certain Western modern philosophers, it is war to the knife.

The former could challenge the latter thus: "We shall accept your system only when it shall be taught by a professor born blind and deaf".

ORIGIN OF HUMAN KNOWLEDGE.

Catholic philosophers teach that all our knowledge is ultimately derived from the exterior world through the senses.

The Adwaitins hold absolutely the same doctrine. For, they teach that the means of knowledge (*pramanas*) are *pratyaksha* (sensuous perception), *anumana* (inference), and *sabda* (testimony), which ultimately can all be reduced to *pratyaksha*, sensuous perception, because the other two *pramanas* suppose and depend on it.

Let us hear Sankara on the matter: "The knowledge of the real nature of a thing does not depend on the notions of man, but only on the thing itself. For to think with regard to a post, 'this is a post or a man, or something else,' is not knowledge of truth; the two ideas, 'it is a man or something else', being false, and the third idea, 'it is a post', which depends on the thing itself, falling under the head of true knowledge. Thus true knowledge of all existing things depends on the things themselves" (Ved. Sutas 19.)

In commenting the Ved. Sutas ii. 2. 30: Sankara refutes as follows the Buddhists' opinion that we may have ideas independently of external things:

"We proceed now to that theory of yours, according to which the variety of ideas can be explained from the variety of mental impressions, without reference to external things, and remark that on your doctrine the existence of mental impressions is impossible, as you do not admit the perception of external things. For the variety of mental impressions is caused altogether by the

variety of things perceived. How, indeed, could various impressions originate if no external things were perceived? The hypothesis of a beginningless series of mental impressions would lead only to a baseless *regressus in infinitum*, sublative of the entire phenomenal world, and would in no way establish your position."

See also the paragraph about the Buddhist subjectivism.

KNOWLEDGE A MENTAL ASSIMILATION.

Christian philosophers strongly insist on knowledge as being *mental assimilation*.

"Every cognition is brought about by the likeness of the object known in the mind that knows." J. Rickaby, (*First Principles*.)

"At the beginning of life the mind is in a purely potential condition with respect to knowledge. They are no innate cognitions, whether sensuous or intellectual. The mind is described as a *tabula rasa*,—a clean tablet in which nothing is yet written—although this term is not completely appropriate, since such a tablet is entirely passive, whilst the intellect is endowed with an innate or *a priori* active power of modifying itself, so as to generate abstract or immaterial representations of sensible objects. In order to apprehend any of these objects, there must be wrought in the mind a form, *modification*, or determination by which it

is assimilated to the object. This modification or form is called the *species impressa*, and we have described in chapter IV., how material objects acting upon the senses produce modifications by which the lower faculties are determined to the sensuous apprehension of these objects. But for the intellectual cognition the higher faculty must be similarly determined by a form of a higher order—a *species intelligibilis impressa*—to elicit a conception of the universal nature or essence of the object.

“The action of the material object awakens sensuous perception which results in a concrete phantasm of the object in the imagination, from which the intellectual concept is derived. But neither this sensuous perception of the object nor the resulting phantasm can directly effect the *species intelligibilis impressa* or generate an intellectual concept. They only contribute the ‘material’ elements or conditions to the elaboration of the concept. For neither the physical thing nor the phantasm can directly reveal itself to the cognitive intellect. Both are individual, concrete, material, whilst the object of the intellect is universal, abstract, and immaterial. They contain, indeed, a universal essence, but individuated in its material determinations. It is in this state only fundamentally universal, and therefore not apt to be immediately taken up into the intellect. It is, according to the Scholastics, as yet only *potentially intelligible*, somewhat as red or green is only potentially sensible in the dark;

it needs to be made *actually intelligible*, in order to be apprehended by the intellect. It has to be abstracted from its individualizing corporeal conditions.

“It is in order to account for the *modification of the spiritual faculty*, or, which is the same thing, for the excitation of the intellect to the generation of the abstract representation of the essence existing individualized in the phantasm, that the schoolmen ascribe to the intellect not merely the capacity of being modified so as to represent the various objects in an abstract or spiritual manner, but also an *active energy* or force of its own, which is chief agent in the production of this *modification*.

“This force is the *active intellect*, the *intellectus agens*. They define it as: An active faculty whereby the *intellect modifies* itself so as to represent in a spiritual or abstract manner what is concretely depicted in the phantasm.” (*Psychology*. Stonyhurst Series.)

Hindu Philosophers :—

“All cognitions are transformations of the mind.”

“It is buddhi, the mind that puts on the forms of external objects.” (Suresvacharya, Tait. Up. 653, 664.)

“Mental expressions are not admitted to originate independently of the perception of external things. Moreover, an impression is a kind

of modification of the mind." (Sankara, Vedanta Sūtras, 426.)

"Like unto a clear mirror, buddhi (the mind) receives an image of external objects." (Suresvacharya, Daksh. Stotra, iv. 8. 9.)

"Cognition is a modification of the mind. Suppose we have the case: 'This (I perceive) is a jar'.—Here, having taken as its object the jar previously unrecognized, the modification of the mind mirroring the form of the jar, on dispelling the ignorance that previously attached to the object, throws light upon the jar by the light of its own intelligence; just as the shine of a lamp, when it throws itself upon the surrounding jars, etc., in the dark, on dispelling the darkness, illuminates them with its own light." (Vedanta Sara, xi.)

"When a change in the mode of the mind is brought about through the eye, it then assumes the form of a pot in virtue of its contact with the pot, and people call it immediate perception." (Sayana Tait. Up. 213.)

ILLUSION (MAYA) THE GREATEST RIDDLE OF ADWAITA.

It seems that Sankara expounds two contradictory systems. For in some places he teaches that the world is real, solid, concrete and objective and in other places he says that the world is not real!

Prof. Deussen's explanation :

“Sankara in these difficulties created by the nature of his materials (the Upanishads), in face of so many contradictory doctrines, which he was not allowed to decline and yet could not admit altogether, has found a wonderful way out. He constructs out of the materials of the Upanishads two systems: one esoteric, philosophical (called by him *nirguna vidya*, sometimes *paramarthica avastha*), containing the metaphysical truth, for the few ones, rare in all times and countries, who are able to understand it; and the other exoteric, theological (*saguna vidya*, *vyavaharica avastha*) for the general public. The former is called higher knowledge; the latter, lower knowledge...” The higher knowledge would teach the unreality of the universe and this only would be true knowledge.

Even *a priori* Deussen's interpretation does not commend itself to our acceptance. It is a too easy expedient to get over a difficulty. This is not untying the knot, it is cutting it. We understand thereby that he has failed to make the synthesis of Adwaita, to find in it a well-constructed system, a living organic whole. Having therefore given up all hope of reconciling the apparent contradictions, he has resorted to the poor expedient that Adwaita teaches two contradictory systems!

Professor Deussen's view cannot be accepted for the following reasons:

I. It is equivalent to a certificate of dishonesty delivered to Sāṅkara, who would have taught error for the general public, and truth for a few ones only !

II. Human knowledge would be nothing else but—the illusory teaching of an illusory teacher for illusory pupils concerning an illusory world.

To put it concretely, the illusory Deussen tells the illusory public that the illusory Sankara has taught that the world is illusion !

Is not that fooling one's reader ?

III. It is not admissible because it fails its purpose, i.e., the very *raison d'être* of the two knowledges.

In fact, if the Adwaitins held actually the world to be mere illusion, what inconvenience would there be in their telling so once for all and for every one, as did the Buddhist idealists, as did Hegel ?

Moreover, the lower knowledge as understood by Deussen, is far more complex than the higher knowledge, and therefore of a more difficult understanding. It comprises the first principles or axioms, the theory of knowledge, the various causes, the proofs of God's existence, His attributes and their relation with His essence, the theory of the evolution of the world from God, the mutual relations between God and the effected things, the

relation between cause and effect, the analysis of the various sorts of existences, etc., etc.

While the teaching of the higher knowledge is the simplest thing in the world! It consists only in several denials: the world is not real; Brahman is not knowable, etc.

Wherefore, not the lower knowledge, i.e., realism, which is more difficult, but the higher knowledge should be intended for the common folk. Just the contrary of what Deussen pretends.

IV. Sankara nowhere states that the lower knowledge is a wrong knowledge meant for the dull public, and the higher knowledge for the intellectuals.

V. If it is a fact that Sankara holds the world to be unreal for the wise (*vidvan*), *a fortiori* should it be unreal for Brahman. But Sankara tells us that the world is real even for Brahman. For he believes in the incarnation of the eternal Lord in the person of Krishna, who moves amongst the Kurus and the Pandavas, driving the chariot of his friend and pupil in the battlefield. This is tantamount to admitting for Brahman also the reality of the phenomenal world.

VI. According to Deussen the world is real in *apara vidya*, but unreal in *para vidya*; and this latter knowledge only is true knowledge.

But the matter is not so simple as Deussen puts it. Is he not aware that in some places the

Adwaitins tell us that the world is neither real (*sat*), nor unreal (*asat*)? (Suresv. Dakshin. Stoṭ. viii. 13.)

Deussen, to be consistent, ought here to offer us a third *vidya* in view of explaining this passage !!

But instead of facing the difficulty, he has found it easier not to mention it at all!

VII. Lastly, the doctrine of the unreality of the world, is to be denied to have been taught by Sankara, chiefly because he has condemned and rejected it when he condemned and rejected unconditionally and scornfully the doctrine of the Buddhist idealists (*vijnanavadas*) and the Buddhist nihilists (*sunyavadas*).

I leave the word to Sankara himself:

“The Vijnanavadas’ doctrine: The perception is to be considered as similar to a dream and the like. The ideas present to our minds during a dream, a magical illusion, a mirage and so on, appear in the twofold form of subject and object, although there is all the while no external object; hence we conclude that the ideas of posts and the like which occur in our waking state are likewise independent of external objects; for they are also simply ideas. If we be asked how, in the absence of external things, we account for the actual variety of ideas, we reply that the variety is to be explained from the impressions left by previous ideas.

“To all this we (the Vedantins) make the following reply :—

“The non-existence of external things cannot be maintained, because we are conscious of external things. In every act of perception we are conscious of some external thing corresponding to the idea, whether it be a post or a wall or a piece of cloth or a jar, and that of which we are conscious cannot but exist. Why should we pay attention to the words of a man who, while conscious of an outward thing through its approximation to his senses, affirms that he is conscious of no outward thing, and that no such thing exists, any more than we listen to a man who while he is eating and experiencing the feeling of satisfaction avers that he does not eat and does not feel satisfied?...If the Bauddha should reply that he does not affirm that he is conscious of no object but only that he is conscious of no object apart from the act of consciousness, we answer that he may indeed make any arbitrary statement he likes, but that he has no arguments to prove what he says....That the outward thing exists apart from consciousness, has necessarily to be accepted on the ground of the nature of consciousness itself. Nobody when perceiving a post or a wall is conscious of his perception only, but all men are conscious of posts and walls and the like as objects of their perceptions. That such is the consciousness of all men, appears also from the fact that even those who contest the existence of external things bear witness to their

existence when they say that what is an internal object of cognition appears like something external. For they practically accept the general consciousness which testifies to the existence of an external world, and being at the same time anxious to refute it, they speak of the external things as 'like something external.' If they did not themselves at the bottom acknowledge the existence of the external world, how could they use the expression 'like something external'? No one says, 'Vishnumitra appears like the son of a barren woman.' If we accept the truth as it is given to us in our consciousness, we must admit that the object of perception appears to us as something external, not like something external.

"But, the Bauddha may reply, we conclude that the object of perception is only like something external because external things are impossible.

"This conclusion we rejoin is improper, since the possibility or impossibility of things is to be determined only on the ground of the operation or non-operation of the means of right knowledge; while on the other hand, the operation and non-operation of the means of right knowledge are not to be made dependent on preconceived possibilities or impossibilities. Possible is whatever is apprehended by perception or some other means of proof; impossible is what is not so apprehended..... Nor, again, does the non-existence of objects follow from the fact of the ideas having the same form as the objects; for, if they were no objects, the

ideas could not have the form of the objects, and the objects are actually apprehended as external.—For the same reason (i.e., because the distinction of thing and idea is given in consciousness), the invariable concomitance of idea and thing has to be considered as proving only that the thing constitutes the means of the idea, not that the two are identical.

“ Moreover, when we are conscious first of a pot and then of a piece of cloth, consciousness remains the same in the two acts while what varies are the distinctive attributes of consciousness; just as when we see at first a black cow and then a white cow, the distinction of the two perceptions is due to the varying blackness and whiteness while the generic character of the cow remains the same. The difference of the one permanent factor (from the two or more varying factors) is proved throughout by the two varying factors, and *vice versa*. Therefore thing and idea are distinct.

“ Further, if you say that we are conscious of the idea, you must admit that we are also conscious of the external thing.

“ And if you rejoin that we are conscious of the idea on its own account because it is of a luminous nature like a lamp, while the external things are not so; we reply that by maintaining that the idea is illuminated by itself you make yourself guilty of an absurdity no less than if you said that fire burns itself. And at the same time you refuse

to accept the common and altogether rational opinion that we are conscious of the external thing by means of the idea different from the thing! Indeed a proof of extraordinary philosophic insight!"—(Sankara, Ved. Sutrās, 421.)

As to the doctrine of the nihilists (Sūnyavādas) that absolutely nothing exists, it "is contradicted by all means of right knowledge, and therefore requires no special refutation."—(Sankara, *ibidem*, 427.)

Thus, since according to Sankara, it is wrong to say that the external world is absolutely non-existent (*śūnya*), and it is wrong also to say that the external world has no objective existence, but is nothing else but subjective ideas or mental impressions; it follows that, on Sankara's view, the world of difference and multiplicity does exist, and does exist as objective and external.

Professor Deussen's theory is therefore wrong. If Sankara held the world to be finally (i.e. in higher knowledge) unreal, it would have been the proper place here in arguing with the Buddhists, to state the distinction made by Deussen.—If Deussen's theory were right, Sankara would have certainly told the Buddhists: I agree with you; the world is illusory, it is all subjective impressions. But for the common folk let us say that during this temporary life (*vyavaharika* existence) the world must be considered as real. Instead of making this obvious distinction, Sankara rejects absolutely and unconditionally the

Buddhist doctrine of an illusory world ; that very same doctrine that Prof. Deussen attributes to Sankara.

Wherefore for all these reasons it is evident that Deussen has given us a wrong solution of the difficulty.

WHAT IS MAYA.

We are now entering into the darkest recess of the labyrinth of Adwaita. One of the causes of the difficulty of understanding Adwaita is due to the fact that the Adwaitins use the word *maya* in many different acceptations. It is a great blunder to take it to mean always illusion. As a matter of fact it is never used in the sense of illusion as generally understood.

I. Maya means sometimes the creative power of the Lord. In this sense it is called also *maya sakti* (power of maya) or simply *sakti* (power), and *avidya*.

“ Brahman is acknowledged to be the cause of the world because all attributes required in the cause (of the world) are seen to be present —Brahman being all-knowing, all-powerful, and possessing the great power of maya.” (Ved. Sutrās, 362.)

Suresvaracharya says that “ the world has been displayed by maya acting in the form of will, intelligence and activity.” (Daksh. Stotra. ii. 33-34.)

II. Maya is taken also for the ideal universe in God's mind before creation.

In this sense it is called also *Prakriti*, *avidya*, *akshara*. (Sankara on Ved. Sū. 243-329.)

III. Sometimes maya means the created universe. In this sense also it is absolutely wrong to translate maya by illusion. The proper word is mystery, i.e. an appearance which cannot be accounted for.

Do not we Christians too say that creation, or the existence of the created universe, is something incomprehensible, a mystery.

The following passage will show clearly that in this case maya means simply incomprehensibility, mystery.

“ Even if all learned men were to join together and proceed to explain the universe, ignorance stares them in the face in some one quarter or another. What answers, for instance, can you give to the following questions?—How are the body, its sense-organs and the rest produced from semen? How has consciousness come to be there?—Do you say that such is the very nature of semen?—Then, pray, tell me how you have come to know it. The inductive method of agreement and difference fails you here; for there is such a thing as sterile semen. ‘I know nothing whatever.’ This is your last resort.

“ It is for this reason that the great ones regard the universe to be a magic. On this the ancients

say : what is a greater magic than that the semen abiding in the womb should become a conscious being endued with various offshoots springing from it such as hands, head, feet, and that the same should become invested with the marks of infancy, youth and old age following one another and should see, eat, hear, smell, go and come ?

“As in the case of the body, so in the case of the fig seed and tree and the like. Ponder well. Where is the tiny seed, and where is the big tree ?

“Therefore rest assured that the universe is maya. As to the Tarkikas (logicians) and others who profess to give rational explanation of the universe, they have all been taught a severe lesson by Harshamisra and others.” (Panchadasi, Tait. Up. by A. Mahadeva Sastri).

“The name *maya* is given to an appearance which cannot be accounted for. It is not non-existent, because it appears; neither is it existent, because it is nullified. It is not different from the Light, as the dark shadow is different from the sun. Neither is it identical with the Light because it is insentient. Nor is it both different from and identical with the Light, because it is contradiction in terms.” (Suresvar. Daksh. Stotra vii.)

The meaning of this passage is that the world cannot be said to be non-existent, because it appears; neither is it self-existent, because

though it seems to be so, its self-existence is nullified by right knowledge.

IV. *Maya* and *avidya* are taken for wrong knowledge, ignorance or illusion if you like, in the following cases :

(a) It is *maya* to imagine that Brahman, the essentially one and simple Being is made up of multiple accidental qualities or other elements distinct from His essence.

(b) It is *maya*, *avidya*, wrong knowledge, illusion to look upon the world as existing by itself independently and apart from Brahman.

(c) It is *maya*, *avidya*, wrong knowledge, ignorance, illusion to take it in a material sense, the evolution of the world from Brahman, i. e. to hold that Brahman has actually become this material, insentient and impure world.

V. Lastly *maya* means illusion in the following case :

Adwaita's mistaken psychology holds that *jiva* (the human soul) is Brahman Himself and therefore all-pervading and the support of the universe. *Jiva* ought consequently to be conscious of his identity with Brahman. But *jiva* is in the illusion that he is different from Brahman, that he is limited, and that the world exists exteriorly, apart from the supposed all-pervading *jiva*.

It is the context that shows in what sense, in each case, the word *maya* should be taken.

Wherefore, maya, when it refers to the world, in the ontological point of view, is never taken for illusion. It is not the reality of the universe that is denied, it is only its independent, self-abiding reality that the Adwaitin denies. My interpretation is legitimated and corroborated by the whole Adwaita literature.

In numberless passages it is clearly stated that the world is not real because *it does not exist apart from Brahman*.

The right comprehension of maya is of capital importance; for it is the key of the whole system.

We have seen that its misinterpretation has entailed the most disastrous consequences.

In what sense the world is said to be unreal.

It is a fact that the Adwaitins teach in some places that the world is *asat* (unreal), or that it is *maya* (illusion). Whereas in other places they uphold its reality! And we have rejected Prof. Deussen's interpretation of two *vidyas*. How shall we solve the riddle? Does not Sankara tell us that "to say that a thing is and is not, is to speak like a drunken man"?

It is necessary to expound first of all the Adwaita doctrine concerning reality.

In perfect accord with Catholic philosophers the Adwaitins make a proper distinction between the Supreme Reality and the created universe.

They teach that there are three sorts of realities :

I. *The Paramarthica Reality* (Brahman), the absolutely true, self-existent and immutable reality.

II. *The vyavaharica reality* (the universe), which only seems to be self-existent, but in reality it is wholly dependent on Brahman, and therefore it has a very inferior sort of reality compared to Brahman.

III. *The pratibhasika reality*—i.e., the illusory reality, as the mirage. Now, since the word *real* is not taken in an identical sense when applied to God or Brahman and to the world, for greater clearness I will represent each reality by a different sign.

I.—Brahman, the self-existent and immutable Reality, is ... REAL (SAT).

II.—The universe, dependent on Brahman and mutable, is ... real (sat).

III.—The illusory reality, as mirage, is ... unreal (asat).

We shall now easily understand what Deussen has failed to grasp. Suresvaracharya in his commentary on Dakṣin. Stotra, viii, 13, says that the world is neither sat (real), nor asat (unreal). He meant to say that it is neither SAT (REAL) which a Brahman alone is, nor asat (unreal), as an illusion, a dream, a mirage, but simply sat (real).

The Adwaitins use the word *asat* in three different senses :

I.—The world is ... *asat* (a-SAT), non-REAL, i.e. not like Brahman.

II.—Brahman is also *asat* (A-sat), NON-real, i.e., not like the world, but above the world's reality—or Super-real.

III.—The mirage, a dream, are *asat*, not real as the world is.

Here I must point out to another blunder of Prof. Deussen. He says that for the Adwaitin Brahman is rather the Non-Existent.

Adwaita does not teach that Brahman is Non-Existent (*asat*), but that He is NON-existent, (A-sat), i.e., that He has not that low degree of existence which is proper to the world and consists in being dependent and mutable, but is Self-Existent and Immutable.

Furthermore, in the Tait. Up., it is said that the world was formerly, before creation, *asat*, unreal.

It is thereby meant that before creation the universe pre-existed in an ideal form without differentiation in Brahman. It was then, therefore, one with Brahman, identical with Him, it was SAT (REAL); and consequently it was A-sat NON-real, i.e., it was above the present lower reality.

Catholics and Adwaitins contend that there are two realities, i.e., one REALITY and one reality: but not two REALITIES; there is only one REALITY.

These explanations concerning the nature of reality enable us to surmise already what the Adwaitin means when he says that the universe is unreal or maya.

The distinction of *para vidya* (higher knowledge) and *apara vidya* (lower knowledge), is not intended to infirm in the least the objective reality of the world. We have just seen how sternly Sankara has maintained it against the Buddhist idealists.

But the Adwaitins had other adversaries who upheld a doctrine which was at the antipode of the Buddhistic idealism. They were giving too much of reality to the world, attributing to it an independent, and underived existence. Against this error rose, and fought vehemently Sankara and his School, denying self-existence to the world and reserving it for God alone.

We are going to see that when the Adwaitins say that the world is not real they mean either of these two things:

I.—That the world is not self-existent but comes from Brahman and depends continually on Brahman.

II. Or, that (according to their mistaken psychology) the world is not without but within jiva which is supposed to be all-pervading.

I. By the unreality of the world is meant non-self-existence but dependence on Brahman.

The doctrine of Adwaita against these Dualists can be summarized as follows: The universe comes from Brahman, the Supreme Cause, who keeps it constantly in existence, it is wholly dependent on Brahman. The alleged self-existent world, as such, is not, it has no reality at all. The reality the world has is not its own, it holds it from Brahman. It is a great error to attribute to the world the quality of self-existence, which is the proper attribute of God. There is a REALITY and a reality, but they are not two REALITIES. Your self-existent world is not more REAL than the snake seen in the rope, or the silver in the mother-of-pearl.

My interpretation is fully justified and corroborated by the very text of the Adwaita literature.

"All effects are mere illusion having no REAL existence *apart from Brahman, the Cause.*" (Ananta-giri on Tait. Up. 278.)

Sankara says:

"The opinion of the entire phenomenal world having *an independent existence* is to be set aside."

"For him who sees that everything *has its Self (Atman) in Brahman* (i.e., abides in Brahman) the whole phenomenal world is non-Existent."

"The entire complex of phenomenal existence is considered as TRUE as long as the knowledge of

Brahman being *the Atman of all* has not risen.”
 (The Atman of all means the support or sustaining
 power of all.) Ved. Sut. 320 - 321.

“Applying the phrase” having its origin in
 speech “to the case illustrated by the instance
 quoted, we understand that the entire body of
 effects (creation) *has no existence apart from Brah-*
man.”.....“So this manifold world with its
 objects of enjoyment, enjoyers and so on *has no*
existence apart from Brahman.” ib.

“In that all this has its Atman,” i.e., its
 abode. ib.

“All effects are mere illusions *having no real*
existence apart from Brahman, the Cause.” Anan-
 tagiri, Tait. Up. 278.

“Objection: Then Brahman is limited by
 other things, in so far as there are things called
 effects.

“Answer: No, because other things spoken of
 as effects are un-REAL.

“*Apart from the cause* there is indeed such a
 thing as an effect REALLY existing, at which the
 idea of the cause may terminate

“Atman owing to the absence of *anything*
separate from Him, is infinite in respect of things
 (i.e., of space).” Sankara, Tait. Up. 295.

“If the effect be not *one with the cause*,
 Brahman and the universe would be two distinct

(read : separate) things : and this is nothing but the duality of the Sankya system." Suresv. Tait. Up. 406.

"Indeed, there exists nothing.....however subtle, removed and remote whether of the past or the present or the future, *as distinguished* (read : separate) *from Brahman in space and time*. Therefore name and form (i.e., the world) in all their variety *have their being only in Brahman*. Brahman's being is not in them. They have no being when Brahman is ignored and are therefore said to have their being in Him." Sankara Tait. Up. 520.

"The universe composed of names and forms are in themselves non-EXISTENT, *because they are not Atman*. What is existent came, verily, from that One EXISTENCE, namely Brahman." Suresv. Tait. Up. 581.

"The meaning of this is not that nothing exists, but that name and effect, which are not permanent, are not Brahman." Anantagiri-Bhagavadgita—xiii. 12.

Sankara says : "The real (sat) here means the reality commonly so called (on account of the context), it does not mean the Absolute Reality, for Brahman the Absolute Reality is only one. As to the real (sat) referred to, it is only relatively so, what we commonly speak of as real (sat). Water, for instance, is said to be (sat) real as compared with the mirage, which is illusory." Tait. Up. 577.

Here the author of the Upanishad calls the world real, and Sankara while endorsing the expression, hints to the metaphysical difference that lies between the reality of the world and the Absolute Reality, which difference he defines elsewhere.

From the foregoing text it follows that Brahman is real, and the world also is real, for it is not a mere illusion like mirage. But the characteristics which differentiate the Supreme Reality from the world is not given therein.

We have those characteristics in the following passages, in which it is clearly stated that when they give to Brahman the name of *Sat* this word means *self-existent* and *immutable*.

And when the world is called *asat*, it is not meant non-existent but *dependent* and *mutable*, or better, *non-self-existent* and *non-immutable*.

“Whatever does not deviate from the form in which it has once been ascertained to be, is *sat*; and what deviates from the form in which it has been once ascertained to be is *asat*.” Sankara, Tait. Up. 240.

“When a thing never puts on a form different from that form in which it has been once proved to be, that thing is *sat*, and as such it must be quite distinct from *karya* (the effect) or what is produced.” Suresv. T. Up. 578.

Compare these two passages with the two texts of St. Augustin in the paragraph: 'The unreality of the world and Christian philosophers.

“Like the illusion in the mother of pearl, the world appears to be REAL only until the Supreme Atman, the immutable Reality behind everything, is realised.” Sankara, Knowledge of the Atman. 7.

Sankara very clearly states what he means by the non-REALITY of the world, also in his work, “Direct realisation”:

“I am indeed Brahman, without change, without form, without blemish and without decay. I am not therefore the body which is un-REAL.”

“I am without difference, without change, and of nature of REALITY, knowledge and bliss, I am not therefore the body which is un-REAL.

“I am stainless, without motion, without limit, pure and devoid of old age and death. I am not therefore the body which is un-REAL.

“Even the subtle body, composed of many parts, unstable, objective, mutable, finite, and un-REAL, how can it be the Atman ?

“(Says the opponent.) By the above distinction between the Atman and the body, it only follows that the manifested world is real, as declared by the science of logic. Your aim therefore fails.”

इत्यात्मदेहभागेन प्रपञ्चस्यैव सत्यता ।

यथोक्ता नर्कशास्त्रेण ततः किं पुरुषार्थता ॥

(The objection is evidently supposed as being raised by the ultra-realist Vaiseshikas and others.)

“This is the answer : By the above distinction between the Atman and the body, the identification of the body with the Atman has alone been refuted. The un-REALITY of the body *as a separate entity* will now be clearly explained.”

इत्यात्मदेहभेदेन देहात्मत्वं निवारितम् ।

इदानीं देहभेदस्य ह्यसत्त्वं स्फुटमुच्यते ॥

We see that Sankara does not reject the reality of the body but only its *separate reality*. The subsequent stanzas explain that the world is not REAL because it comes from Brahman and has its abode in Brahman.

See also Select Works 157.

Again, in his introduction to the Vedanta Sūtras, Sankara speaks as follows :

“It is a matter not requiring any proof that the subject and object (Vishayi or Atman, and Vishaya or whatever is not Atman) are opposed to each other as much as darkness and light are, and therefore can never be identified. All the less can their respective attributes be identified. Hence it follows that it is wrong to superimpose upon the subject the attributes of the object, and vice versa.”

He goes on stating that this superimposition, *adhyasa*, is also called *avidya*, ignorance. We know that *avidya* is another name for *maya*.

In a work which is intended to teach Brahman, Sankara begins with the avowal that there is something besides Brahman or Atman; and that that something is as opposed to Atman as darkness is to light. Furthermore he says that it is error, avidya, maya, to superimpose the attributes of the one upon the other.

In the eyes of the Adwaitins the world is so real that it exists even before it appears! even before its creation!

It is a very deep and at first sight a most astounding and paradoxical assertion indeed! We will see that it is true, a great truth, which we shall find more lucidly presented by Christian philosophers.

Sankara and his disciples teach that the birth and disappearance of created beings are only changes, and that of all the changes birth of course is the first. An object cannot undergo changes unless it exists already.

Here is the explanation. All beings of creation existed in God's mind previous to creation in an ideal form. The same is to be said of any being that is born, of any object made by man. We realise thereby the superiority of Vedanta over Plato, who conceived the ideas, but placed them outside God. The Vedantins and Christian philosophers rightly placed them in God. Hence creation is but a new form of a world already existent.

Sankara in the Brhadaranyaka Upanishad says that "an effect must be existent before its manifestation. If the future pot does not exist at all, God's perception of it now will be false.....The pot should be taken to *exist always*... We only say that the future pot now exists in a subtle form." This subtle form is nothing else than what Christian philosophers call ideal form in God's mind.

In the Vedanta Sutrās ii. 1. 17, Sankara speaks as follows: "The non-existence of the effect before its production is not absolute non-existence, but only a different quality or state, *viz.*, the state of name and form being unevolved, which state is different from the state of name and form being evolved. With reference to the latter state the effect is called, previous to its production, non-existent although then also it existed identical with its cause."

To the question "What could Brahman know before the origin of the world?" Sankara replies: "Names and forms unevolved but about to be evolved." Ved. Sut. I. 1. 5.

Anantagiri upholds the same doctrine. "There is no evidence of the momentary existence of any thing whatever. The sruti, moreover, declares that Atman's vision is never obscured." Tait. Up. 249.

Very far, therefore, from denying the reality of the world, Advaita makes it eternal!—not, of course, in its material form, but in the ideal archetype which is in God's mind.

And this doctrine of the eternity of the world, as idea, is in perfect agreement with the Catholic teaching.

Saint Anselm in the *Monologium* ix, says that creatures have not been created absolutely *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), because they already existed in the divine intellect which had their idea or archetype.

II. Second sense in which the world is said to be unreal.

We have seen that Adwaita condemns unconditionally the Idealism or illusionism of the Buddhists. We know also that the Adwaitins, when rejecting the ultra-Realism of the Vaiseshikas and others, have stated that by the unreality of the world they only mean that the world is not self-existent but dependent on Brahman.

So far everything is as clear as daylight.

But now we are faced with another very great difficulty. The whole scaffolding seems to crash to the ground! For Adwaita teaches that the human soul in *samadhi* (deep meditation) and in *mukti* (after death, united with Brahman, or rather identified with Brahman) does not see the world; that, for it, the world does not exist; that this world considered as real during this temporary life is declared to be absolutely non-existent in the point of view of the liberated soul!

Moreover Advaita teaches that the world is within jiva, not without!

There, we have you, will exclaim many of my readers; you are melting down the concrete world into idealism.

No; this statement that the universe is within jiva and not without, does not land us into idealism. The world remains concrete, solid. No Advaitin will deny it. "If the world didn't exist it won't appear any more that the hare's horns." Suresv. on Dksh. Stotra.

What the Advaitin contends is that the world, though existent, is not where it seems to be!

Yet there is no room for Idealism. The concrete world is simply brought in within jiva, not by melting it down, but by extending jiva. But how can that be?

To the right interpretation of Advaita it is necessary that we should place ourselves on its own standpoint. We know that for the Advaitin, the human soul is identical with Brahman; but on account of its connection with the senses and the body, it is unaware of that identity. The realisation of this identity is supposed to take place in samadhi and mukti.

On account of the screen of the body, jiva, during this temporary life, sees the world as external, apart. This is a sort of wrong knowledge on the point of view of Advaita psychology. True

and final knowledge shall be obtained only in samadhi and in mukti when identity with Brahman is supposed to be obtained. Then jiva being all-pervading and omnipresent shall see the world as Brahman sees it: no more exteriorly, but within himself.

The distinction of lower knowledge and higher knowledge does not refer to the ontological reality of the world, but only as to how it appears from two different standpoints. The terms themselves show it clearly: *para avastha*, higher position; *apara avastha*, lower position. The Adwaitin looks upon the world first as man, (*apara avastha*), and he sees it exteriorly. But when he shall have realised his identity with Brahman (in mukti), then from that standpoint, from that plane he will see the world within himself, (*para avastha*.)

Now we can understand in what sense the Adwaitin says (incorrectly) that in mukti (i. e., when identified with Brahman) jiva won't see the world.

"As to the saying that then He sees not, (we say that) *while seeing* verily, He sees not. For, no failure of the Seer's sight, as it is undying; but no second one exists, *distinct and separate from Him*, which He might see." Bri. Up. 4—3—23.

"Who by virtue of illusion residing in Atman, sees, as in a dream, the universe existing outside himself, like the reflection of a city in a mirror, although it exists within himself"...Dakshin. Stotra.

Suresvaracharya commenting on the Dakshina-murti Stotra, says:

“.....

“N. 8. —All the things which we perceive exist here within (in our Self the Paramatman, the Highest Self). Within is the whole of this universe. By maya it appears as external, reflected as it were in a mirror.

N. 9. —Just as in *svapna* (dream) the universe exists in one's own Self and yet appears to be external, so be it known that even in the *jagrat* (waking state) this universe exists within and yet appears to be external.

N. 12. —Just as, when awake, a man sees not the things which were presented to his view during sleep, so subsequently to the rise of right knowledge, he sees not the universe.

[*Remark.* By saying “he sees not the universe” he means that he sees it not as apart and external to the all-pervading Paramatman, the alleged self of man.]

N. 14-15. —“When the Sruti, by the Master's instruction, by practice of Yoga, and by the grace of God, there arise a knowledge of one's own Self, then as a man regards the food he has eaten as one with himself, the adept Yogin *sees the universe as one with his Self, absorbed as the universe is in the Universal Self which he has become*”.

All these texts show clearly that the concrete world witnessed in the lower knowledge (apara vidya) is not denied by the higher knowledge (para vidya), it is only brought in solid as it is within jiva, by stating that jiva is infinite and all-pervading.

Wherefore it is evident that when the Adwaitins say that for the released jiva the world does not exist, that it is illusion, they only mean to deny the "exterior world," not the world that is within the supposed all-pervading jiva.

But we have mentioned the Adwaitins' tenet that jiva in mukti won't see the world at all !

I reply to this difficulty in the paragraph where I deal with the subjective knowledge of God.

There I explain that God's knowledge is absolutely independent, that He does not derive His knowledge from the exterior universe, but from Himself.

God knows not the world by direct knowledge of the world, but by the direct contemplation of His own essence which contains the archetypes of the whole creation.

It is in this sense that the Adwaitins and Christian philosophers themselves say that God sees not the world, though He knows it better than any created being can know.

God knows the original ; we know only the copy, a very faint copy of the type.

A man who knows personally another man, does he not know him better than he who knows him only by a photo?

When you have a man before you, do you look at his photo to know him? and don't you know him much better than by picture?

According to the Adwaitins, *jiva* in *mukti* being identical with Brahman, he shall see the world as Brahman sees it, i.e., not by direct vision of the universe but subjectively.

In other terms, *in mukti*, *jiva*'s knowledge would be nothing else but Brahman's knowledge.

Catholic philosophers too say that neither God nor the human soul in heaven see the world by direct knowledge.

They hold that there are three modes of seeing the world :

I.—Man during this life sees the objective world directly through the senses.

II. In heaven he shall see it in God ; i.e., by contemplating God's essence, which contains the archetypes of the whole creation, he shall see in it, as in a mirror, whatsoever he shall see.

III. Lastly, God, whose knowledge is absolutely independent, sees everything in Himself.

In conclusion, the reality of the world so well established and maintained by Sankara against the Buddhist illusionists, has never been denied by him,

and Deussen's arbitrary and fanciful theory of two systems, *viz.* a wrong one, realistic for the common people, and a true one, idealistic for the philosophers, has thus been exploded.

His interpretation is nothing but sham science, and bluff. It is a matter of very deep regret that all the western Orientalists, the Missionaries, the Indian Scholars themselves and the Theosophists should all have followed him so blindly.

SUMMARISING THE DOCTRINE OF MAYA.

I will summarize as follows the doctrine of Maya. The world is considered by Adwaita from three points of view.

i.—On the point of view of its ontological reality, it is contended that the world is real, concrete, objective; but, as the world's reality is derived, dependent and mutable, it has not that intense reality of Brahman, who alone is the UNDERIVED, INDEPENDENT, IMMUTABLE REALITY.

Hence, the world as dependent on Brahman is real; but if you think that the world exists independently from Brahman, that world is not, it is mere illusion, a creation of yours.

ii.—On the point of view of perception Since according to Adwaita jiva is identic with Brahman, and hence all-pervading and omnipresent, jiva should not see the world as existing exteriorly, but

in himself. This does not land us into Idealism. For the world's concrete existence is not denied; but, having, as it were, extended jiva, and made him all-pervading, the concrete world from without has been brought in within jiva! Wherefore, the Advaitins teach that the world is, but it is not where jiva sees it now, during this worldly life; for it is not outside jiva, but within.

iii.—On the point of view of knowledge in mukti, i.e., after death when jiva shall have realised his identity with Brahman.

In the supposition of the possibility of that realisation, jiva's science should be Brahman's science itself. Now we have seen that Brahman's science is wholly subjective and independent of any alien means or factors. God does not know the world by direct perception of the same. As in God's mind are contained the types of all created things, He knows all by knowing Himself. Hence, in mukti, jiva's knowledge of the world should equally be wholly subjective.

THE NON-REALITY OF THE WORLD AND CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHERS.

Christian philosophers are in perfect agreement with the Advaitins concerning the relative reality of the world. This statement is likely to startle my Hindu readers and even some Christians!

Christians, like the Advaitins, hold God to be real and the world also. But in ontology where

they deal with the nature of reality they dichotomise it into self-subsistent-immutable reality and dependent-mutable reality ; i.e., God and the world. Hence when we apply the same qualifications to God and to creatures, these qualifications have not a univocal meaning, i.e., without variation ; they have only an analogical meaning, i.e., partly the same and partly different.

So that, when we say that God is real, we mean self-subsistent, underived and immutable reality ; and when we call the world real, we only mean derived, dependent and mutable reality. Both are real, but there is a vast difference between the two realities.

The Bible defines God "*He who is*". If God be "*He who is*" the world must be "*what is not*". In other terms, if God is the Reality, the world is the non-Reality.

About the year 1320, Jesus Christ in one of His apparitions to St. Catherine of Genoa, asked her "Do you know who I am ?" — "I am He who is, and you are what is not."

The Bible in several places says that the world is vanity, emptiness:

"Vanity of vanities, all is vanity." Ecclesiastes, i. 2.

The sacred writers commenting upon this text say that vanity means emptiness, nothingness, shadow, vapour.

“ When I behold the multitude of created things, I do admire them, but on considering that they are transient and decaying, and that God alone is immutable, I must say: all (created things) is vanity of vanities.” *St. Jerome.*

St. Augustin says: “ And I beheld all the things that are beneath Thee, and I saw that they are neither wholly real nor wholly unreal; they are real in so far as they came from Thee, they are unreal because they are not what Thou art. For that alone is truly real which abides unchanged.” *Conf. xi.*

Again: “ God’s reality is such that created things compared to Him are not real. Not compared to Him, they are real, because they came from Him; compared to Him, they are not real, because He alone is true and immutable reality.” *St. Augustin* in Ps. 134. n. 4.

“ Don’t you see, O man, don’t you feel, is it not palpable that all things are void, fleeting and false?...because by themselves they are nothing...for, what they possess of truth and goodness, they owe it to God from whom they have received their whole being, their essence and existence.....Their being is void and comparable to a shadow. All human things are but smoke, shadow, emptiness, similar to stage pictures; in one word, they are nothing.” (*Cornelius à Lapidé.*)

From these passages it clearly follows that Christians and Adwaitins have made the same

proper distinction between the supreme, self-subsistent, immutable, underived Reality,—and the derived, mutable reality of the world.

God is.....REAL.....i.e.,...underived, self-subsistent and immutable.

The world is.....real.....i.e.,.....derived, dependent and mutable. Wherefore it is evident that we must say that the world is non-REAL, because it is only real.

God is REALITY, TRUTH, GOODNESS, BEAUTY, SELF-SUBSISTENT and IMMUTABLE. The world is dependent and mutable reality, truth, goodness, beauty.

God's REALITY, TRUTH, GOODNESS, BEAUTY are HIS own.

The world's reality, truth, goodness, beauty are not its own, but derived from God.

Hence, compared to God, the world is non-REALITY, non-TRUTH, non-GOODNESS, non-BEAUTY.

BRAHMAN.

THE ADWAITA PHILOSOPHERS IN SEARCH OF GOD.

The great problems that have ever engrossed the mind of man from the distant generations of Egypt, Niniveh, Greece and Rome up to the

present time, have equally evinced the keenest attention of the thinkers of India.

These harassing questions are the following :

Is there a Supreme Being ? What is the origin of the world ? What is the human soul ? What is the destiny of man ?

On the whole, psychology excepted, the system of India that gives the best replies and rises to higher metaphysical planes is the Adwaita.

We shall follow the Adwaita philosophers in their exposition of the proofs of God's existence and subsequently in their lofty flights on the very summits of metaphysics when they deal with God's nature.

Who are the greatest men in the world ? In whatsoever field of human activity, be it in art, or in industry or in any science, the greatest men are those who excel by their ideas.

For it is to carry out, to manifest his ideas that a man acts. But did you ever ask yourselves wherefrom man derives his ideas ? Are ideas innate in our mind, or do we borrow them from the outside ? It is the emphatic teaching of all the philosophers of Adwaita as well as of Catholic philosophers that all our ideas, even those that seem quite new, original, inedited, are not innate, not our own, but derived from the exterior world. A man born blind and deaf has no ideas because he cannot get any from the exterior universe. The

universe is the stock wherein have been, as it were, stored up for us numberless ideas.

Wherefore, a man is intellectually superior to others, not because he is the author of his ideas, but only on account of his ability in combining and adapting to circumstances the ideas he has borrowed from the world.

Now in any work produced by man, the idea is anterior to the work. For the work, the painting, the statue, the poem, the speech or whatever it may be, are but the concrete manifestation of an idea. And since the universe is the cause of our ideas, the source wherefrom we draw them, it is evident that the universe too is but a concrete manifestation of ideas, and that these ideas according to which the world has been created and organised are anterior to the world.

But whose are these ideas, these archetypes of the world? The unintelligent matter cannot account for them, for it is incapable of thought. Of what ideas is capable the clod of earth that gives us the violet, the lily and the rose? Can the clod of earth conceive the beauty of their form, the delicate hues of their colours, the sweetness of their perfume? Man himself, who is much superior to it, cannot do what, according to the materialists, the clod of earth is supposed to perform.

On the other hand we cannot admit with Plato that ideas stand by themselves. Sankara rejects this opinion when he contends against the Buddhist

idealists that thought cannot stand by itself, but postulates a thinking subject.

Therefore, the ideas of order, truth, beauty, and goodness that shine in the world are the concrete manifestations of a thinking Subject, of that infinitely intelligent and powerful Being whom the Adwaitins call Brahman and we Christians call God, Jehova, Eloim or Allah, or Sarvesura.

Certainly it was these considerations that led the Adwaitins to state the following proofs of the existence of God.

All these proofs rest on the principle of causality or sufficient reason which is supposed throughout, *viz.*, that what is less cannot produce what is more, or in other terms, nothing can give what it hasn't got. A rabbit won't bring forth an elephant.

I Proof :—Order of the world.

Sankara in the Vedanta Sutas, ii. 2. 1., says :

“ A non-intelligent thing which, without being guided by an intelligent being, spontaneously produces effects capable of subserving the purpose of some particular person is nowhere observed in the world. We rather observe that houses, palaces, couches, pleasure-grounds, and the like—things which according to circumstances are conducive to the obtainment of pleasure or the avoidance of pain—are made by workmen endowed with intelligence. Now look at this entire world which appears, on the one hand, as external (i.e., inanimate)

in the form of earth and the other elements enabling the souls to enjoy the fruits of their various actions, and, on the other hand, as animate, in the form of bodies which belong to the different classes of beings, possess a definite arrangement of organs, and are therefore capable of constituting the abode of fruition;—look, we say, at this world, of which the most ingenious workmen cannot even form a conception in their minds, and then say if a non-intelligent principle like the *pradhana* (i.e., primeval matter) is able to fashion it! Other non-intelligent things such as stones and clods of earth are certainly not seen to possess analogous powers. We rather must assume that just as clay and similar substances are seen to fashion themselves into various forms, if worked upon by potters and the like, so the *pradhana* also (when modifying itself unto its effects) is ruled by some intelligent principle.”

II :—The activity that is seen in the world.

Leaving the arrangement of the world, we now pass on to the activity by which it is produced. These activities also cannot be ascribed to a non-intelligent *pradhana* left to itself, as no such activity is seen in clay and similar substances, or in chariots—which are in their own nature non-intelligent, and enter on activities tending towards particular effects only when they are acted upon by intelligent beings such as potters, etc., in the one case, and horses and the like in the other case. From what is seen we determine what is not seen.

Hence a non-intelligent cause of the world is not to be inferred because, on that hypothesis, the activity without which the world cannot be produced would be impossible. To the objection of the Sankyas that a pure Intelligence cannot produce movements, Sankara replies :

“ A thing, which is itself devoid of motion, may nevertheless move other things. The magnet is itself devoid of motion, and yet it moves iron ; so the Lord also who is all-present, the Atman of all, all-knowing and all-powerful, may, although himself unmoving, move the universe.” V. S. II. 2. 1.

St. Thomas tackles differently the argument from motion. He takes motion in its broadest metaphysical sense, *viz.*, the passing from a state of potentiality into a state of actuality, and draws his argument from the impossibility of an infinite series of things moved.

The proof from motion as presented by St. Thomas has a greater force than that of Sankara.

Adwaita supplies us with two other proofs of the existence of God.

III : The contingent and temporary supposes the necessary and eternal.

Suresuvaracharya says :

“ The non-existent in the past and in the future cannot exist in themselves even in the present ;

therefore they have their being in the Isa, the Lord, as to whom there is no before and after."

On Daksh. stotra, IV--3.

The gist of the argument is that what is temporary, fleeting, contingent has not in itself the *raison d'être* of its existence; and consequently there must exist a necessary, permanent, eternal Being that gives existence to all other beings.

This proof is much stronger as presented by St. Thomas, who says:

"The third proof is taken from possibility and necessity, and runs thus. We find in nature things that could either exist or not exist, since they are found to be generated and then to corrupt; and consequently, they can exist and then not exist. It is impossible for these always to exist, for that which can one day cease to exist must at some time have not existed. Therefore, if every thing could cease to exist, then, at one time there could have been nothing in existence. If this were true, even now there would be nothing in existence, because that which does not exist only begins to exist by something already existing. Therefore, if at one time nothing was in existence, it would have been impossible for anything to have begun to exist; and thus even now nothing would be in existence, which is absurd. Therefore, not all beings are merely possible, but there must exist something the existence of which is necessary. Every necessary thing either has its necessity caused by another, or not.

“It is impossible to go on to infinity in necessary things which have their necessity caused by another, as has been already proved in regard to efficient causes. Therefore we cannot but postulate the existence of some being having of itself its own necessity, and not receiving it from another, but rather causing in others their necessity. This all men speak of as God.” (*St. Thomas, Summa Theol.*)

IV :—Another Proof.

Corresponding to the IV proof of Thomas Aquinas, Adwaita adduces a IV proof of God's existence from the two following principles:

The effect is contained in potency in the cause—or in other terms it is impossible that a being absolutely new should come into existence. What is commonly called the birth or origin of a being, properly speaking, is not such: it is only a change, i.e., the manifestation under another form of a being already existent in its cause in a different form.

.... The effect therefore cannot but be similar to the cause, or (in a certain restrictive sense), be of the same nature as its cause. So that, if the alleged effect is of a nature absolutely dissimilar from the cause, it cannot be the effect of that cause.

Adwaita tells the upholders of evolution from the primeval matter or from atoms: It cannot be

that a clod of earth should have produced living plants and animals, as it is impossible to get milk from a stone.

Neither is it possible that combination of atoms should give birth to plants and animals, for they are not contained in potency in the atom. What do you see in a tree? Atoms? No. What is the very first idea that strikes you when you see a tree? It is existence, not atoms.

Now, existence is not the very nature of atoms. Brahman's nature alone is existence, pure existence. Wherefore all that has any existence must come from that Existence, in which it was contained in potency, in an ideal form, as the palace is contained in the mind of the architect before it is built. (*Sankara on Vedanta Sutas.*)

IS BRAHMAN UNKNOWABLE?

According to the interpretation of Prof. Deussen followed by all the Orientalists, Brahman would be absolutely unknowable. The lower Brahman, the Brahman with attributes, would only be a human conception, having no reality at all, whom the Adwaitins offer to the common people for the sake of worship. This lower personal Brahman would therefore have no connection at all with the Higher Brahman, who is supposed to be impersonal, undeterminate, vaporous, and unknowable.

This view is as mistaken as the two-system-theory concerning the reality of the world.

What the Adwaitins mean by "Lower Brahman" and "Higher Brahman":---

If we give Him attributes, call Him Creator and Ruler of the world, and say that He knows or thinks, etc., without adding further explanations—*that is the Lower Brahman, a finite Brahman.*

If we add that the attributes are not realities, — that the fact of His being the Creator and Ruler of the World entails no relation to creatures,—that His act of thinking or knowing is not temporary and mutable but eternal and immutable, --*then we have the Higher Brahman.*

In the mind of the Adwaitin the Lower Brahman is not a make-shift intended to lure the vulgar; He is nothing else but the Higher Brahman incompletely defined. So much so, that the teaching of the Higher Brahman is inseparable from the teaching of the Lower. For it is by the knowledge of the Lower that we can rise to the understanding of the Higher. The knowledge of the Lower Brahman is not a wrong knowledge, but an incomplete knowledge that leads to a more complete one; it is a step, a gateway to the knowledge of the Higher Brahman.

Giving attributes to Brahman is not wrong. It is only an incomplete teaching, which is perfected when the Adwaitin adds that the multiplicity thereby implied is sublated by the explanation that the attributes in Brahman are not accidental and distinct qualities, but are His very essence,

His One and Indivisible Essence; so that in Brahman all multiplicity is fused in the perfection of unity, a rich unity which is equivalent, and infinitely more, to the multiplicity of attributes whereby we define God.

The following passages shall unmistakably evidence that Advaita holds Brahman to be knowable, and that the Lower Brahman is not a makeshift, altogether unconnected with the Higher, but is intended to lead to the knowledge of the Higher.

I. The Advaitins have a fine illustration. They say that just as a man, wishing to point out to a friend the minute star Arundhati, at first directs his attention to a big neighbouring star, saying "this is Arundhati" although it is really not so; and thereupon withdraws his first statement and points out to the real Arundhati: so does the Vedanta show us Brahman first in one form and then in another until they lead us to the knowledge of His true nature. (V. S. 66.)

II. Sayana in Tait. Up. 680-681, says that both affirmations and negations serve to indicate the nature of Brahman.

Again (Tait. Up. 272-273) he says: "The attributes are calculated to give rise to a knowledge of Brahman...and since all of them alike are calculated to lead to a knowledge of Brahman, they should all be taken into account in determining the essential nature of Brahman."

III. True, Brahman is said to be unknowable. But we must not forget that in many passages He is called "the Knowable" by Sankara in his commentaries on the Bhagavad Gita and the Tait. Upanishads.

IV. "All the words which are used to impart a true knowledge of Brahman only give us to understand Him indirectly, by implication; they fail to denote Him directly." (Sureswaracharya, Tait. Up. 653.)

V. It is true that the relation of substance and attribute is not real; still, it does form a gateway to the knowledge of Brahman in His true nature, in the same way as a reflection, which is false in itself, leads to a knowledge of the real object. "In so far as from the three adjunct (real, knowledge, infinite is Brahman) we thus get a knowledge of the essential nature of Brahman, they constitute a definition of Brahman." (Sayana. Tait. Up. 264.)

The Advaitins teach that, though there are no words to define Brahman directly (*vachayataya*), He can however be described indirectly (*lakshayataya*). This same idea Christian philosophers express thus: The qualities taken from the created world when attributed to God are not applied to the world and to God univocally but analogically; when applied to created things they are but accidental qualities while when we give them to God we mean nothing accidental but His one and indivisible essence.

VI. Sayana in Ved. Sut. i. 1-2, beautifully explains how the teaching of the Lower Brahman is intended ultimately to impart the knowledge of the Higher Brahman; i.e., all the qualifications that seem to limit Brahman, point ultimately to its One-Infinite-Indivisible Essence.

“Question:—The definition of Brahman is given by the sruti here in the following passages:

“Whence indeed these beings are born; whereby, when born, they live; whither, when departing, they enter: That, seek thou to know; That is Brahman.”

“Real, Consciousness, Infinite is Brahman.”

“Here a doubt arises as to whether this definition of Brahman holds good. (*Prima facie* view): It does not hold good. We ask what are the defining marks of Brahman? Is it the *birth*? etc...or the *reality*, etc. that constitute the definition? *Birth* etc., cannot be the defining marks of Brahman, for, they inhere in the universe and do not pertain to Brahman.—Neither can *reality*, etc., be the defining marks of Brahman; for, such reality and consciousness as our experience knows of have distinct meanings and relate to distinct things, and so cannot lead to a knowledge of the one indivisible Brahman. And it does not stand to reason to say that such reality and consciousness as our experience does not know of are the defining marks of Brahman. It is not therefore possible to define Brahman either directly or indirectly.”

To this objection so well formulated Sayana replies:

“As against the foregoing we hold as follows: Though birth, etc., inhere elsewhere, Brahman may be defined indirectly as the cause of the birth, etc., this causality being falsely attributed to Brahman. (*Note*: he only means thereby that the fact of His being creator does not affect His unrelatedness; the relation being only on the side of the created things.) We say, for instance, (what appeared to be) the serpent is this garland. So it is possible to define Brahman through what is ascribed to Him, thus: Brahman is that which is the cause of the universe.

“Just as it is not incompatible that one single person, Devadatta, should be spoken of as father, son, brother, son-in-law, etc., though these words have quite distinct meanings, so also the words ‘Real, Consciousness,’ etc., which, as understood in their ordinary sense, convey distinct meanings and refer to distinct things, may point to the indivisible non-dual Brahman and thus constitute the proper definition of Brahman.” (Sayana on Tait. Up. 713. See also 212.)

VII. With a view to impart a knowledge of Atman divested of all conditions, the sruti proceeds with this section as follows:

“The knower of Brahman reaches the Supreme”. (Sankara Tait. Up. 201.)

“The question as to the essential nature of Brahman will be discussed later on (in chapter IV). (*Ibid.* 220.)

Now, in the chapter IV referred to, for the essential definition of Brahman, Sankara makes to that definition the following introduction: “The knower of Brahman reaches the Supreme”, is to express in an aphoristic form the whole teaching of the second book. Now the following verse is quoted with a view to determine the nature of Brahman—who, as has been indicated in the words “the knower of Brahman reaches the Supreme,” is the thing to be known, but whose characteristic nature has not yet been stated definitely—by way of giving a definition which will set forth His characteristic nature as distinguished from all else”.

Then comes the definition of the Upanishad :

“On that this has been chanted: Real, Consciousness, Infinite is Brahman”.

VIII. It is the Unconditioned (Nirvisesha) alone that all the definitions ultimately refer to”. (Sankara, Tait. Up. 271.)

“Scripture says, ‘The higher knowledge is this by which the Indestructible is apprehended. That which cannot be seen or seized which is without origin and qualities, etc.’ (Sankara. Ved. Sut. Page 134.)

“... The knowledge of the Imperishable is the knowledge of Brahman. On the other hand

the term 'knowledge of Brahman' would become meaningless if the Imperishable which is to be comprehended by means of it were not Brahman." (*Ibid.* P. 138.)

IX. Lastly, Sankara, who is supposed to have held the Higher Brahman unfit for worship, he himself worshipped the Higher Brahman!

The reader shall be fully convinced of this fact if he goes through his commentaries on the Ved. Sutrās. He shall see therein that Sankara puts the following heading to almost all the chapters: "*Reverence to the Highest Atman.*".

All these passages show with the greatest evidence that the scope of the Upanishads and their commentaries is to teach the Higher Brahman, to worship the Highest Atman.—Wherefore it is obvious that the Adwaitins do not hold the Higher Brahman to be unknowable; nor do they teach the necessity of lowering Him for the sake of worship. What they mean is that for the sake of worship a lower knowledge is sufficient, but not that the Lower Brahman is only a make-believe disconnected from the Higher.

Yet...it is a fact that the Adwaitins, sometimes, say that Brahman is not knowable at all and is incapable of worship.

Let us see in what sense Brahman cannot be an object of knowledge nor an object of worship.

Most of the difficulties we meet with in the study of Adwaita are to be solved by placing ourselves on the standpoint of the peculiar psychology of that system.

For the Adwaitin, the knowledge of Brahman comprises also the doctrine of the identity of the human soul (jiva) and Brahman.

This tenet has nothing to do with the objective knowledge of Brahman ;

Properly speaking it is not knowledge, it cannot be taught, it is an experience (anubhava) which is supposed to be realised in deep meditation (samadhi) and which Brahman grants to whom He chooses.

“By devotion, Brahman seek thou to know. Devotion is Brahman ” Tait. Up. Bhrgu Valli.

“This Self (Atman) is not obtainable by explanation, nor yet by mental grasp, nor by hearing many times ; by him whom so He chooses by him He is obtained. For Him the Self His proper form reveals.” Katha Up. 2-23.

It is therefore not question of knowing Brahman “as He is,” but only of a knowledge of Brahman by mystic union, nay by alleged identification.

But, by holding this sort of experience possible, the Adwaitins do not deny or reject what they have taught concerning the objective knowledge of Brahman. See Tait. Up. 744.

Well then, since the sruti teaches that to know Brahman properly He should be known also as being identical with jiva, and since this identity cannot be demonstrated, nor understood, the Adwaitins say that, in this sense Brahman is unknowable, and worship impossible.

For, worship requires two beings, the one superior, the other inferior. Where there is identity no worship is possible.

It is only in this sense that the higher knowledge of Brahman excludes worship.

It is therefore evident that Professor Deussen has been mistaken in taking *ad literam* the text, "*Na iti, na iti,—He is not so.*" and similar passages as nullifying absolutely all the affirmations. If he had read "The Names of God" of the Pseudo-Areopagite he would have learned that "neither negations nor affirmations must be taken absolutely."

Negations are a very efficient means of definition, used in all science, not only in philosophy. The definition of the snake would be incomplete unless you add that it has no legs. In geometry don't we learn that the point has a place but has no dimension? and that the line has length but no breadth?

Negations are absolutely necessary for defining the Supreme Reality. They are not absolute, for they do not deny the thing signified, but only the mode. To explain, as all the qualities or names

we give to God are taken from the created finite world, it is obvious that these finite ideas cannot be applied to God in the very same sense but only in an analogical sense.

When we take the quality of goodness from the created world and apply it to God, we proceed thus: we say God is good, but "*na iti*,"—goodness is not in Him as it is in man, a mere limited accidental quality, in Him it is not a quality, it is His very essence. Philosophically speaking, we can even say that God is not good, i.e., He has not the quality of goodness but is Goodness itself. What St. Augustin finely expresses thus: "God is whatever He has."

Such is the meaning of negations, "apavada". They do not deny the thing signified, but only the manner whereby the thing is found in creatures. For, God possesses all that is signified by positive qualities, not as qualities but in a more eminent manner, i.e., as His one single indivisible essence.

Hence "*na iti, na iti*," could be rightly construed thus: "Brahman, though not thus, is all this, and infinitely more, but in a more eminent manner."

As it has already been stated, when Christian and Indian philosophers say that God is unknowable, it is only in the sense that He cannot be comprehended, i.e., perfectly known by a finite mind. The knowledge we have of God is right though imperfect.

We know what He is not, and besides we know something of His essence. What we know of Him is right though not exhaustive.

It is in this sense that are to be taken all the passages that seem to teach that Brahman is unknowable, as :

Brahman is that “ whence all words return (i.e. without attaining Him) as well as thoughts.”

यतो वाचो विवर्तन्ते अप्राप्य मनसा सह ।

When Vashkali bade Bâhva to teach him Brahman, the sage explained Him by silence. The Guru said to him: “ Learn Brahman, O friend,” and became silent. When questioned the second and the third time, he replied : I am teaching you indeed, but you do not understand : silence is Brahman. Sankara. Ved. Sut. III. 2. 17.

“ He who says he knows Brahman, knows Him not ; he who says that he does not know, knows Him.” Ken. Up.

अविज्ञातं विजानताम् ; विज्ञातम् अविजानताम् ।

“ Thy greatness none can comprehend, all dumb the Vedas are.” Tukaram. (Na kale marima.)

Christian authors are equally emphatic in upholding God's incomprehensibility in the sense mentioned above. And what is worthy of remark, they use the same expressions, the same figures of speech.

“Woe to them who do not speak of Thee, for they that have much spoken are dumb.” St. Augustin, Conf. I. 1-4.

“God alone knows Himself as He is; our intellect is too narrow to comprehend Him; wherefore rightly do we understand Him if we say that we do not understand Him. I shall speak as I feel it: he who thinks he knows His greatness, lowers Him; he who objects to lower, does not know Him.” Minutius Felix in Octavio n. 18.

“His greatness by far distances our impotent speech.” Chrysostom, Hom. I.

“All attributes may be given to God, yet no attribute suits Him. Nothing richer than this poverty of language.” St. Augustin.

Christian mystics who have been favored with God's vision do not speak otherwise. St. Paul the Apostle says that what he has seen cannot be expressed.

Angela of Foligno has an expression of her own:—When requested to expose the mysteries disclosed to her in her visions, she would say: “It is not possible, the tongue is cut off.”

In conclusion both Adwaitins and Christians agree that God is knowable but that He cannot be perfectly understood, or comprehended by a finite being as man is, and that what we know of Him is sufficient to evince our admiration, our worship and our love for such an exalted Being.

The high Knowledge of God's absolute transcendency has not prevented the greatest Christian philosophers from being men of deepest piety kindled with the most intense love of God.

The following passage, in which piety and philosophy are so happily blended, shows what God means for the Christian philosopher. At the same time it can be taken as construing with greater clearness the Adwaita's doctrine on Brahman, and also as showing that the Absolute, the Unrelated, the Non-dual-distant-Infinite-One, who possesses in His rich unity whatever of reality, goodness, truth and beauty is contained in the created multiplicity or in any multiplicity of attributes, and infinitely more—is not too distant but that we may admire, adore and love Him.

“O Lord God! Great and terrible art Thou! God of immeasurable majesty! Thou art an infinite ocean of being, of goodness and of beatitude, compassing in Thyself all being and all good; anticipating it from all eternity, possessing it before it existed; for Thou art the source of all being. Thou art the foundation of all possible things. Thou art the superessential being of all beings, both of those that are and those that are not. Without Thee nothing can exist either in act or in potency, or can ever be conceived by any understanding. Thou art the beginning of all beings, the end of all beings, their Creator, their support, their place, their duration, their term, their order, their connection, their harmony and their consummation. All good that

is in men and in angels is in Thee, and also the good of every purpose or end of all beings, both of those that are and of those that are not. In Thee reside all glory and dignity and riches and treasures ; all sweetness and consolation, all joy and all beatitude. Thou art my God and my all ; the God of my heart ; my portion and my God for all eternity.

“ In Thee are all things. In Thee they are most pure, are enjoyed simultaneously and without limit. In Thee are found in a supereminent manner the glitter of gold, the beauty of precious stones, the fruits of the fields, the delights of gardens, the magnificence of palaces, the riches of cities, the glory of kingdoms. Every thing that is desirable in the world, all that is glorious and honorable are found in Thee in the highest degree, in the most perfect purity, and all in the closest union for ever and ever. Moreover from them is excluded every imperfection that is found in created things.

“ In Thee are found all delights and pleasures, all that recreates, all that charms, all consolations and joys, all beauty and all felicity, all beatitude and all consummation of beatitude. It is from Thee that what is sweet derives its sweetness, what is luminous its splendor, what is living its life, what has feeling its sensation, what moves its power, what has understanding its knowledge, what is perfect its perfection and what is good its goodness.

“Thou art the author, the type, the end and the preserver of all perfection. Thou terminatest all infinity ; Thou goest beyond every end.

“Thou art perfect in Thyself, perfect beyond all conception, perfect from all eternity ; possessing in Thyself by Thy simple unity all excellence and all perfection.

“Thou art great without quantity ; good without quality ; infinite without number ; beautiful without figure ; eternal without time ; immense without location ; diffused without extension ; perfect without multiplicity ; and most high without situation. Thou art the centre of the universe to which all things tend by their innate weight ; in which they all rest and by which they are all sustained. In Thee are found the attraction of every love ; the consummation of every desire, the term of every movement, and the satisfaction of every appetite.

“What is not the power of Thy supereminent goodness, since at the least gleam of its rays, and even of its faintest reflection, all creatures rush towards it with impetuosity ! For every being in this universe seeks its own special good and tends towards it with all its might. But that good is only a feeble vestige of Thy goodness. It is good that attracts every creature and excites every movement in the world ; and all that moves, acts and works in created things, moves, acts and works only by the desire of something good. But if a faint shadow excites such power, what will not the Truth itself do ?

“Draw my soul to Thee, O boundless Beauty ! Enchain it to Thee by an indissoluble bond and by the eternal fetters of Thy love. For what can I seek or desire outside of Thee who art the plenitude of all good, the source, the end, the sweetness of every good, and who art infinitely better and more excellent than all good ? Let me therefore despise every thing else, and let me ever think of Thee. Let me love Thee always ; let me live intimately attached to Thee, and let me make of Thee my abiding place.” (Lessius. *The Names of God*, Passim.)

PARABRAHMAN A PERSONAL GOD.

Christian Philosophers call “person” a complete rational nature endowed with free will, that subsists in itself and not as a natural part of something else.

Personality attributed to God may be taken in Three different senses :

I. In its narrowest signification it could mean an anthropomorphic God who would rule the world from the heights of His heavenly throne.

II. It could mean that God though spirit, is extra-cosmic ; or at the best, though He be omnipresent and the support of the created universe, would yet be limited, because believed to have attributes really distinct from his essence, implying thereby multiplicity and hence limitation.

III. Christians condemn and reject these two conceptions of God's personality, and hold that personality when applied to God means, that He exists in Himself and not as a part of the universe,—that He possesses intelligence and free will, and that at the same time He is absolutely one simple and infinite essence.

This definition of personality does not make God limited in the least, because, “we deny in Him relation and limitation by asserting that the perfections, which we represent to ourselves by distinct concepts as His attributes and modes, are objectively in Him as a single and absolutely simple reality.” Boedder.

We shall soon see that, though we don't find in Adwaita a definition of personality, its doctrine concerning God's nature, shows clearly that it maintains the very same tenet.

Modern Hindus by personal God mean an anthropomorphic God or a limited God, in the sense mentioned above in the first two sorts of personality. And they call impersonal the infinite and unrelated Supreme Being as taught by the Adwaitins and by Christians. The divergence therefore is only apparent, a merely verbal one. We agree in the thing itself; for, by impersonal they mean what we call personal.

I must add that modern Hindus have a wrong idea of the Brahman of Sankara's school. They have adopted the doctrine of the Western pantheist.

Dr. S. Radhakrishnam, professor of philosophy at the Calcutta University, speaks as follows of the Brahman of the Vedanta :

“ The Absolute is nothing short of the universe in its totality. ”

“ Self and not-self into which the universe has been dichotomised are no rivals, but are the different expressions of the same Absolute. ”

“ The Absolute is the organic whole consisting of the different elements of matter, life, consciousness, and intellect. These are the expressions of the whole ; but if they set themselves up for the whole, we are in the region of maya. As part of the Absolute they are real ; as unconnected with it they are illusory. ” The philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore 18. 65.

The genuine doctrine of Advaita on God is not therefore to be sought for among the modern scholars but in the works of the great philosophers of the IX century, viz. Sankara, and his immediate disciples Suresvaracharya and Anantagiri.

But what do Christians mean by impersonal ?— If God were, as the pantheists teach, neither intelligent, nor free, and not distinct from the world, He would be impersonal.

The passages I am going to cite will evidence for any one that Advaita upholds God's infinite personality in the very same christian sense exposed above, because it teaches that Brahman is *intelligent, free and distinct from the universe.*

I. Brahman is intelligent.

Brahman is *jnanam* or *chit*, i.e. knowledge (Tait. Up.)

“To Brahman there is nothing unknowable however subtle, concealed and remote it may be, whether past, present or future. Wherefore Brahman is all-knowing.” Sankara Tait. Up. 258. Besides see the whole article about God’s science or knowledge.

II. Brahman is endowed with free will.

In the second stanza of Dakshinamurti-stotra, Sankara attributes free will to God. So also does Suresvaracharya in his commentary on the same stanza.

“His consciousness and agency are quite independent and absolute.

“The peculiarity of His will consists in absolute freedom.

“Who can define the self-reliant will of Isvara by which He is free to act, or not to act, or to act otherwise?” *Vide* Tait. Up. 209.

III. Brahman is distinct from the universe.

As some Hindu translators use sometimes the word *distinct* for *separate*, it is not out of place to call the reader’s attention on the matter and to state that by *distinct* we don’t mean *separate* but *different, other than*. God is distinct from the world because He is different from it, but He is not

separate from the world because He is intimately present everywhere.

“Ānatman and Atman (i.e., the universe and Brahman) are opposed to each other as much as darkness and light are, and cannot be identified.”

Sankara. Introd. to Vedanta Sutas.

“The Supreme Lord exists, without any difference in all living beings, from Brahmā down to the unmoving objects.....

“All living beings are perishable while the Supreme Lord is imperishable. Thus there is a great disparity between the Supreme Lord and the created beings.” Sankara. Gita XIII. 27.

“When so defined by the epithets “*Sat*” and so on, Brahman is distinguished from all other substances, none of which possess the said attributes of Brahman, i.e., which are all *asat*, insentient and finite. A thing is said to be known when known as distinguished from all else.....Similarly Brahman can be said to be known only when known as distinguished from all else, since otherwise, there can be no definite conception of Brahman.” Suresv. Tait. Up. 236.

The connection of Brahman with the world does not and cannot change the original nature of Brahman. “For, says Sankara, even the connection with the limiting adjuncts is not able to impart to a thing of a certain original nature an altogether different nature.” Ved. Sut. III. 2. 11.

"All things other than Brahman, should, because of the very fact of being other than Brahman, be regarded as effects." Suresv. Tait. Up. 303.

"We have to condemn that theory also which says that production of an effect etc., are only different states of the cause itself." Sankara. Gita. XVIII. 48.

"The Atman is without parts and without a second; but the body is comprised of many parts. And yet they identify the two. Can any ignorance be worse than this?"

"The Atman is of the nature of knowledge and pure; the body consists of flesh and is impure. And yet they identify the two. Can any ignorance be worse than this?"

"The Atman is eternal and (sat) immutable by nature; the body is transient and mutable, And yet they identify the two. Can any ignorance be worse than this?"

"I am indeed Brahman, without change, and of the nature of reality, knowledge and bliss. I am not therefore the body which is *asat* (i.e., dependent and mutable). This is what the wise call Knowledge."

"I am stainless, without motion, without end, pure and devoid of old age and death. I am not therefore the body which is *asat* (i.e., dependent and mutable). This is what the wise call Knowledge."

"The Atman is thus distinct from both the gross and subtle bodies. It is the informing Spirit, the Supreme Lord, the abode of all, one with all, the "I", the immutable." Sankara. Direct Realisation.

"All this universe being other than Atman is un-REAL; for, Atman alone is all inclusive, is the ultimate goal and is self-established and self-dependent." Sankara. The ten-versed hymn. 8.

"I am neither the dense body nor the senses, nor the evanescent and most erratic mind, nor reason, nor life, nor the ego, nor wife, nor house, nor offsprings, nor kith'and kin, nor land, nor wealth, and so on. For, how can I, the witness, aloof, the pure consciousness, the inner self, be all these things which are purely objective? I am the Supreme, that is the reality behind all this universe." Sankara, The century of verses, 92.

THE OBJECTIONS.

Methinks I see my opponents coming to the offensive brandishing the most terrible weapons. They will urge :

Adwaita teaches :

I. *That Brahman is the material cause of the world.*

II. *That as the spider emits out of itself the threads of its web, so Brahman evolves the world out of Himself.*

III. *That the world is Brahman.* (*Sarva kalu idam Brahman.*)

IV. *That there is no duality.*

That Brahman is real, the world is false.
(*Brahman satyam jagat mithya.*)

V. *That by knowing Brahman we know all.*

Therefore, say my opponents, your interpretation that Brahman is held to be different from the world is wrong, and Adwaita remains a sheer materialistic pantheism.

I will reply one by one all these objections.

I do admit that these are dangerous expressions to be used only with metaphysicians. They are like a razor, a useful instrument for the man who knows how to use it, but very dangerous in the hands of a child.

In using this language, we must not forget it, the Adwaitins had in view to refute the theories of a self-existent *pradhana* (*materia prima*) of the Sankyas, and the self-existent atoms of the Vaisesikas, and to bring the whole creation under the sway of Brahman. We must not take these expressions in their literal sense, but in a broad sense.

I. *Brahman is the material cause of the world.*

The Adwaitins do not mean thereby that Brahman has actually become the world, since, as

it is stated elsewhere, Brahman is absolutely immutable and incapable of increase.

What they mean is this: Since there was nothing existing besides Brahman, Brahman didn't use for creation any pre-existing material, He has supplied everything; moreover, as the effect pre-exists in the cause, as the world was contained potentially in Brahman in an ideal form, the expression that Brahman is the material cause of the world, in a broad sense, can be tolerated.

If you press the Advaitins to explain what exactly they mean by that expression, they will reply as follows:

“Brahman is the efficient cause, because there is no other ruling principle, and the material cause, because there is no other substance from which the world could originate.”

“Brahman is the material cause, for that reason also that He is spoken of in the sacred texts as the source of all beings.”

Sankara Ved. Sut. 286-288.

“The statement of co-ordination made in the clause ‘all is Brahman’ aims at dissolving the wrong conception of the REALITY of the world, and *not at intimating that Brahman is multiform in nature.*” Sankara V. S. 156.

This passage shows clearly that the expressions Brahman is all ” or that “He is the material cause

of the world " are not to be taken in a material sense.

Moreover to the objection that " the world is different in nature from Brahman, and therefore cannot have Him for its material cause," Sankara replies:

"If absolute equality were insisted on, the relation of material cause and effect would be annihilated....." In the case of Brahman and the world, characteristic (common) feature, viz. that of existence, is found in ether, etc. (which are the effects, as well as in Brahman who is the cause). He, moreover, who on the ground of the difference of the attributes tries to invalidate the doctrine of Brahman being the (material) cause of the world, must assert that he understands by difference of attributes either the non-occurrence (in the world) of the entire complex of the characteristic of Brahman, or the non-occurrence of any characteristic, or the non-occurrence of the characteristic of intelligence.

The first assertion would lead to the negation of the relation of cause and effect in general, which relation is based on the fact of there being in the effect something over and above the cause (for, if the two were absolutely identical, they could not be distinguished).

The second assertion is open to the charge of running counter to what is well known; for, as we have already remarked, the characteristic

quality of existence which belongs to Brahman is found likewise in the ether, and so on.

For the third assertion the requisite proving instances are wanting; for, what instances could be brought forward against the upholder of Brahman, in order to prove the general assertion that whatever is devoid of intelligence is seen not to be an effect of Brahman?" Sankara, Ved. Sut. 305. 306.

To conclude, when Sankara says that Brahman is the material cause of the world he only means to say that He didn't use any pre-existing material, that He is the source of the world's existence, that existence is common to Brahman and to the world.

Why should we not pass this expression to Sankara?

Denis the Pseude-Areopagite has used it.

The Names of God, IV. 10. 154

II. *As the spider etc.* Let us see the full text. "As the spider emits out of itself the threads of its web.....so the intelligent Brahman also may be assumed to create the world by Himself without extraneous means." Sankara Ved. Sut. 348.

Sankara's emphatic language concerning Brahman's immutability does not allow us to take this passage in its material sense. Moreover the text itself shows that the illustration is meant to indicate simply that as the spider does not use extraneous means so Brahman also creates the world without

using extraneous means, not that Brahman substance is being evolved into the universe.

III. *The world is Brahman.*

If it is legitimate to say in a certain broad sense that Brahman is the material cause of the world, it follows naturally that one can uphold the Brahmanhood of the world, or in other terms the divinity of the world.

Adwaita is not alone to teach the divinity of the world. The great christian philosopher Denis, five centuries before Sankara, has used the very same expression. He says that created things are "divine." (The Names of God.)

What do the Adwaitins thereby mean? Is the term "Brahmanhood of the world" an appropriate one?

At first, does it not seem shocking to maintain the Brahmanhood or the divinity of the world? But on closer examination we find that the Adwaitins do not hold that the world is Brahman in a material sense, for at the same time they lay great stress on Brahman's aloofness, on His immutability, on His unrelatedness to any thing, on His being lifted above the visible universe, on His being untouched by duality, etc. Moreover, the Adwaitins say that "though the world is made up of Brahman, Brahman is not made up of the world." Suresv. Tait. Up. 310.

Therefore, to understand what is meant by the Brahmanhood of the world it is necessary to rise higher.

We must not forget that the Adwaitins are bent upon rejecting the self-existent world of the Sankyas and the Vaiseshikas. They tell them that the universe cannot have evolved from the eternal pradhana, nor from the eternal atoms, but comes from the Supreme Cause Brahman, in whom it was contained undifferentiated in an ideal form, was identical with Brahman, was Brahman Himself. They tell them that Brahman's nature being EXISTENCE, whatever is perceived to possess existence, must come from that Supreme Existence, and not from any other source.

By the Brahmanhood of the world, the Adwaitins mean that much and nothing more.

The expression Brahmanhood or divinity of the world is legitimated by its having been used by some Christian philosophers and by the Catholic doctrine concerning the evolution of the world from God. In fact don't they hold that the material world is the concrete manifestation of the ideal world contained in God's mind? That the created things have being by participation, that they are good by participation, that they are a copy, an imitation of God's perfections, that previous to creation the universe existed in God's idea, that it was identical with Him, that it was God Himself?

Wherefore, for all these reasons, not only it is not objectionable to maintain the Brahmanhood of the world with the Adwaitins, or the divinity of the world with Christian philosophers, but we must recognise that it is a beautiful, lofty metaphysical language.

I will remark that, when the philosopher says that the world is Brahman, he is right in saying so, for he takes that expression in its proper metaphysical sense, but if the man-in-the-street says the same thing, he is wrong, because he understands it in a material sense.

IV. *There is no duality.*

The Adwaitins thereby mean that they are not two independent existences, Brahman alone being the independent existence, for, the universe depends entirely on Brahman, has its abode in Brahman; that the apparent self-and-independent-existence of the world is false.

V. *By knowing Brahman all is known.*

This sentence means that to know Brahman properly is to know Him also as creator, i.e., to know also all that depends on Him, the whole created universe.

GOD'S ATTRIBUTES.

The Bible defines God = "He who is". It is thereby indicated that existence is God's chief attribute, His essential attribute, i. e., God's essence is to be.

"The name *He who is*, as it contains the substantive verb to be in the present tense, connotes the essence of God to be unalterable eternity, an unchangeable standing 'now' in the midst of transitory created existences." St. Thomas in B. Boedder Natural theol.

The Hindu reader will certainly enjoy the following passage of St. Thomas, which Sankara would gladly endorse.

To the objection that essence and existence are not the same in God he says:

"On the contrary, Hilary says: In God existence is not an accidental quality, but subsisting truth. Therefore what subsists in God is His Existence."

"I answer that God is not only His own essence, but also His own Existence. This may be shown in many ways.

First,—Whatever a thing has besides its essence must be caused either by the constituent principles of that essence, like the property that follows from the species— as the faculty of laughing is proper to a man— and is caused by the essential constituent principles of the species; or by some exterior agent, as heat is caused in water by fire. Therefore if the existence of a thing differs from its essence, then this existence must be caused either by some exterior agent or by its essential constituent principles. It is impossible that a thing's existence should be caused solely by its

essential constituent principles, for nothing can be the sufficient cause of its own existence, so long as existence is caused at all. Therefore, that thing the existence of which differs from its essence, must have its existence caused by another. This cannot be true of God; because we call God the first efficient cause. Therefore it is impossible that in God His Existence should differ from His essence.

Second,—Existence is that which makes every form or nature actual; for goodness or humanity are only spoken of as in act, because they are spoken of as existing. Therefore, existence must be compared to essence if they differ, as actuality to potency. Therefore, since in God there is no potentiality, it follows that in Him essence does not differ from existence. Therefore His Essence is Existence.

Third,—Because, just as that which has caught fire, but is not itself fire, is on fire by participation; so, that which has existence but is not its own existence, exists by participation. God is His own Essence; if, therefore, He is not His own Existence, He will not be the First Being—which is absurd. Therefore God is His own Existence; and not only His own Essence.” Summa Theol. 36.

Christian philosophers lay much stress on the attribute “Existence”. It constitutes, so to say, God’s metaphysical essence. For here lies the difference between God and creatures. In God essence and existence are identical, i. e., one and

the same thing; whereas, in all other beings, there is a real distinction between essence and existence.

God simply is; creatures are "some thing." In creatures existence abides in the essence; in God there being no composition nor potentiality, the existence does not abide in the essence, but in itself.

Hindu Philosophers :

Though not so explicit the Hindu philosophers seem to have guessed that God's metaphysical Essence, so to say, consists in His Existence.

"He exists." Thus alone is He to be known. (Kata Up. 6-13).

"Brahman is Existence and Self." (Chand. Up.)

"Brahman is Existence pure and simple" (Sankara Tait. Up. 244)

"Satyam jnanan anantam Brahman."

"The word 'satyam' connotes unfailing existence." Anandagiri Tait. Up. 252.

"The Self-luminous and Existent Reality is recognised as 'He is.'" Suresvaracharya on Daksh. Stotra.

The other attributes.—(*Brahman nirguna?*)

The Ādwaitins are wrongly charged to teach that God has no attributes. It is a fact that Brahman is said to be "*nirguna*," i. e. without attributes. But let us see in what sense Brahman is said to be *nirguna*.

We must not forget that if the Adwaitins call Brahman nirguna, they say also that He is ananta-guna, i. e., that He has endless attributes. Before all I will quote the chief attributes given to Brahman by the Adwaitins.

Brahman or God is called by the Adwaitists Reality, Supreme Reality, Absolute Reality, Uncreated Reality, the Real of the real, the pre-eminently Real, Existence, Pure Existence, Self-Existent (or *ens a se*), the One, the Great One, One indivisible Essence, Existence-Knowledge and Bliss, Eternal, Infinite, Immortal, All-Knowing, All-Mighty, Absolute, Unconditioned, Supreme Being, Supreme Lord, the Great Unborn, Beginningless, Invisible, Incorporeal, Secondless, Pure knowledge, Self-luminous, Inscrutable Resplendence, Omnipresent, Creator, Ruler of the world, First Cause, Independent Cause, Cause par excellence, Good, Merciful, Light of lights, Immutable. Incapable of increase or diminution, Incapable of evolution, Immanent in the world, Lifted above the phenomenal world, never an Agent (i. e., never the agent of a transitory act); so One that He is devoid of the distinction of the Knower, Knowledge and the known, the Knowable, the Unknowable, having numberless attributes and having no attributes (in the sense of accidental qualities). That etc.

The definition of Brahman is given by the Taittiriya Upanishad as follows:

“Whence indeed these things are born; whereby, when born, they live; whither, when departing, they enter: That seek thou to know; that is Brahman.”

And: “Real, Knowledge, Infinite is Brahman.”

“It is the task of the Vedanta Sutra to set forth Brahman's nature, and they perform that task by teaching us that Brahman is eternal, all-knowing, absolutely self-sufficient, ever pure, intelligent and free, pure knowledge, absolute bliss.” Sankara V. S. 25.

“The higher knowledge is this by which the Indestructible is apprehended. That which cannot be seen nor seized, which is without origin and qualities, without eyes and ears, without hands and feet, the eternal, all-pervading, omnipresent, infinitesimal, that which is imperishable, that it is which the wise regard? as the source of all beings.” (Mu. Up.) Sankara V. S. 135.

“That heavenly person is without body, he is both within and without, not produced, without breath and without mind, pure.” Sankara V. S. 139.

“He is Unborn, Conscious, Pure, Imperishable. Transcendental, Unperturbed, Invisible, without parts, Blissful.” (Hymn to Hari).

“He is the one God hidden in all beings, all-pervading, the Atman within all beings, the Witness, the Perceiver. the only One.” (I. Up. 8).

In the hymn to Hari, Sankara says that God has "endless attributes."

The Adwaitins teach therefore that Brahman has endless attributes and that He has no attributes.

Some of my readers may not be aware that Christian philosophers use the very same expressions.

The Pseudo-Areopagite in his lofty work, "The Names of God," says "God is neither quality nor quantity." And Lessius in his treatise of the same title says: "God is good without quality."

God is also called by Christian authors, "Panonymos and anonymos, omninomius and sine nomine;" i. e., possessing all names, all attributes and having no name, no attribute.

St. Hilary says: "In God existence is not an accidental quality, but subsisting truth."

"What name shall I give Thee Who art without name and has all names?" (St. Gregory of Naziance.)

I contend that the pious Rishis of India and the Adwaita philosophers, when they call Brahman *nirguna*, they do not mean to deny to Brahman all attribute. Though they are less clear than the Christian writers, there is no doubt that they hold the same doctrine i.e., that Brahman being *akhanda eka rasa* (one and indivisible essence), the attributes do not inhere in Him as accidents to substance, but that they are one and the same as His

substance. In other terms, the attributes, conceived by us as distinct from God's essence, are in Him without real distinction.

Christian doctrine :

Multiplicity of attributes and essence absolutely indivisible are incompatible without the help of some distinction. For simplicity in the highest degree clashes with the idea of division and multiplicity.

The attributes as we conceive them, are not real; they are distinction of reason with real foundation (*distinctio rationis cum fundamento in re.*) Thereby we mean that the attributes we give to God are not mere fancies of our mind, but have a real ground in God's essence.

As our intellect cannot comprehend His infinite essence by a single concept, we find ourselves in the necessity of expressing its various aspects by many concepts. The perfections thus expressed, though not found in God under the same formality, i.e., as distinct from one another and as distinct from His essence, yet they are in Him, not as attributes but as His indivisible essence.

“ All perfections existing in creatures divided and multiplied, pre-exist in God simply and united. Thus when any name expressing perfection is applied to a creature, it signifies that perfection distinct in idea from other perfections, as for instance, by the name *wise* applied to a man, we signify some perfection distinct from a man's

essence, and distinct from his power of existence, and from all similar things; whereas when we apply it to God, we do not mean to signify any thing distinct from His Essence, or Power, or Existence. Thus also this name *wise* applied to man in some way circumscribes and comprehends the thing signified; whereas this is not the case when applied to God; but it leaves the thing signified as incomprehended, and as exceeding the signification of the name. Hence it is evident that this name *wise* is not applied in the same way to God and to man. Hence no name is predicated univocally of God and of creatures."

"The perfect unity of God requires that what are manifold and divided in others should exist in Him simply and unitedly. Thus it comes about that He is one in reality, and yet multiple in idea, because our intellect apprehends Him in a multiple manner, as things represent Him." St. Thomas: Sum. Theol.

"From the fact that God is infinite in His essence, it follows that He Himself is necessarily infinite in every kind of perfection that belongs to Him, namely, in greatness, power, wisdom, holiness, etc.....These perfections are in Him by a single and most simple form, which is absolutely infinite and unlimited. For they are not real properties proceeding from the Essence, but are the Divine self-subsisting Essence Itself, and consequently are a simple form of the Divinity which can be comprehended by us only imperfectly."

“ By reason of this simplicity God is infinitely more perfect and more excellent than if He possessed all the perfections in different forms, compounded and united with each other ; for it is infinitely more perfect and more excellent and more sublime to possess all perfections by a single form than to possess them by different forms. For these different forms are really limited to their own species. Hence it follows that they could not constitute the Divinity or be the Deity itself. But that form which in its supreme simplicity contains all perfections, is necessarily limitless and infinite. It is being by itself, *a se*, and consequently is the Divinity itself. ”

Lessius : The Names of God.

Advaita philosophers.

The passages I am going to quote will persuade every one that the Advaitins, concerning God's attributes, uphold the same doctrine as the Catholic philosophers.

Since the Vedantins seem to sum up all the divine attributes in these three : Existence, Knowledge, Infinitude (Satyam, Jnanam, Anantam), what they say concerning these attributes, must be extended to the others.

“ Since all the attributes alike are calculated to lead to a knowledge of Brahman, they should all be taken into account in determining the essential nature of Brahman. ” Sayana. Tait. Up. 273.

“Brahman cannot be described by the word ‘Jnana.’ On the other hand, by the word ‘Jnana’.....Brahman is *indicated*, but not described inasmuch as Brahman is devoid of attributes such as genus.”

“Neither can Brahman be defined by the word ‘Real’. Being in His essential nature devoid of all alien elements, Brahman, when defined as Real, is only indicated by the word which denotes the genus or universal of *being* (*satta-samanya*) in the external world. Brahman cannot indeed be primarily denoted by the word ‘satya.’

“Accordingly, in their close proximity, the words ‘real’ etc. determine the sense of one another; and while thus shewing that *Brahman cannot be directly designated by the words ‘real’ etc., they serve also to indicate the essential nature of Brahman.*” Sankara Tait. Up. 259.

“These words, without giving up their own meaning, indicate the nature of the Supreme by eliminating every thing alien to His nature and removing the ignorance which is at the root of the illusion. ‘Real’ and other words used here have different meanings only in so far as they serve to eliminate different ideas such as unreality. When the elimination has taken place, all these words point to the one essential nature of Brahman, which is not therefore an assemblage of words.” (i. e., they imply no composition or multiplicity in Brahman.) Suresv. Tait. Up. 260.

“(Objection):—But, in the words ‘Brahman is Real’ the sruti says that Brahman is denoted by the word ‘real’ and thus admits of the attribute of reality.

“(Answer):—No, because of the sruti declaring that Brahman is beyond speech in the words, ‘whence all words turn back.’ But the word ‘real’ which in common parlance is applied to the real of our ordinary consciousness, and which, on the strength of the attribute of such reality falsely ascribed to Brahman, excludes the opposite attribute of unreality, points to the Real Brahman, the mere Existence devoid of both the attributes, just as a person extracts by one thorn another that has pierced into his sole, and then, casting aside both, leaves the sole alone. Thus the definition that ‘Brahman is real’ is faultless.”

The word ‘jnana’.....ascribes to Brahman the attribute of cognition, with a view first to exclude inertness and insentiency from Brahman and then to indicate the true nature of Brahman as devoid of even that attribute, i.e., as the Pratyagatman, as the Eternal Consciousness. All this has been clearly explained by the Vartikakara. The sruti says:

“Sight is indeed inseparable from the seer.”

“As a mass of salt has neither inside nor outside, but is altogether a mass of taste, thus, indeed, has the Atman neither inside nor outside, but is altogether a mass of knowledge.”

“In these passages the sruti declares that the Atman is one Eternal Pure Consciousness, and it is the actionless Self of this nature that is hinted at by the word ‘jñāna’ (consciousness). Therefore the definition that Brahman is Consciousness is free from all faults.”

“Plurality of definitions is due to the plurality of popular illusions concerning the nature of Brahman, which have to be removed; and Brahman is not, on that account, of many kinds. It is the Unconditioned (nirvishesha) alone that all the definitions ultimately refer to.”

..... It is this Brahman, the One Indivisible Essence, that is referred ‘to’ in the passage “Real, Consciousness, Infinite is Brahman.” Sayana. Tait. Up. 259-273.

It is evident therefore from these passages that the Adwaitins are bent upon contending that, though the attributes given to Brahman are not realities, it is right to give Him qualities; for, though distinct in idea, they all point to the One-indivisible-Essence.—Their idea is explained by St. Thomas with his usual incomparable clarity as follows: “To the objection, ‘it seems that affirmative propositions cannot be formed about God,’ St. Thomas Aquinas replies:

“I answer that true affirmative propositions can be formed about God. To prove this we must know that in every true affirmative proposition the predicate and the subject signify the same

thing in reality, and signify something else in idea...It is manifest that man and whiteness have the same subject, and differ in idea; for the idea of man is one thing, and whiteness is another. The same applies when I say, Man is an animal; the being 'man' is truly an animal, for they exist in the same subject (supposito), both the sensible nature by reason of which he is called animal, and the rational nature by reason of which he is called man; hence this predicate and subject are in the same subject (supposito), but differ in idea...

“To this diversity in idea corresponds the plurality of predicate and subject, while the intellect signifies the identity of the thing by the composition itself. God however, as considered in Himself, is altogether one and simple. still our intellect knows Him by different conceptions; so however that it cannot see Him as He is in Himself. Nevertheless, although it understand Him under different conceptions, it knows that one and the same simple object corresponds to its conceptions. Therefore the plurality of predicate and subject represents the plurality of idea; and the intellect represents the unity by composition.”

To this other objection, “The intellect understanding anything otherwise than it is, is false,” the same philosopher replies:

“This proposition, ‘the intellect understanding anything otherwise than it is, is false,’ can be taken in two senses; accordingly as this adverb

'otherwise' determines the word *understanding* to the thing understood, or to the one who understands. Taken as referring to the thing understood, the proposition is true, and the meaning is: Whatever intellect understands that the thing is otherwise than it is, is false. This does not hold in the present case; because our intellect, when forming a proposition about God, does not affirm that He is composite, but that He is simple. But taken as referring to the one who understands, the proposition is false. The mode of the intellect in understanding is different from the mode of the thing as it exists. It is clear that our intellect understands material things below itself in an immaterial manner; not that it understand them to be immaterial things; but it understands them in an immaterial manner. Likewise, when it understands simple things above itself, it understands them according to its own mode, which is in a composite aspect; but still not as if it understood them to be composite things. Thus our intellect is not false in forming composition in its ideas concerning God." Summa Theol. Q. XIII. 12.

ANOTHER WAY OF DEFINING GOD.

We have just seen how Brahman is defined by positive qualities. Now we shall see him defined by negations.

Sankara says that, according to ancient tradition, Brahman is to be defined by attributions

(adhyaropa) and negations (apavada). Christians follow the same method.

Hence the Advaitin often repeats that Brahman "is not so". (Na iti, na iti.)

"NON-being, verily, this in the beginning was. Thence, indeed, was the being born", (i. e. the world). Tait. Up.

असद्वा इदमग्र आसीत् ततो वै सृजयन् ।

Sankara explains: "NON-being", means the unmanifested Brahman as distinguished from the universe with specific names and forms manifested." Tait. Up. 'This' refers to the universe.

Here both, the sruti and Sankara, make a proper distinction between God's REALITY and the relative reality of the world. As God is above all the categories of the world, if we call the world "being", we must say that God is "NON-being," i. e., not like the world, above the world's reality.

Wherefore the meaning of the text quoted above is this:

"Prior to creation, this universe was Brahman Himself, here spoken of as "NON-being." Thence, from that NON-being, was born the being, with specific names and forms distinctly marked."

Sankara ib. 581.

"It is neither coarse nor fine, neither sharp nor long, neither red like fire nor fluid like water; it is without shadow, without darkness, without air,

without water, without attachment, without taste, without smell, without eyes, without ears, without speech, without mind, without light, without breath, without measure, having no within and no without; it devours nothing and no one devours it." Brihad. Up.

"It cannot even be said that It is One. How then can there be a second, other than That? there is neither absoluteness nor non-absoluteness, neither non-entity nor entity; for It is absolutely non-dual in Its nature. How can I describe That which is established by all the Vedantas."—Sankara, The ten-versed Hymn. 9.

न चैकं तदन्यद्वितीयं कुतः स्यात्

न वा केवलत्वं न चाकेवलत्वम्

न शून्यं न चाशून्यमद्वैतकत्वात् ।

कथं सर्ववेदान्तमिदं ब्रवीमि ।

This negative way of defining God used by the Adwaitins, has ever been in great honour amongst Christians. This way is more noble, stern and energetic.

In this sublime way of defining God, Christian philosophers by far surpass the Adwaitins. Denis occupies the first place.

He says: "God is not (is not real) because He is above all that is." What agrees perfectly with the Adwaita expression "Brahman is the NON-being (*A-sat*)."

But let us hear Denis at greater length.

“ Raising our language higher we say : God is neither soul, nor intelligence ; He has neither imagination, nor opinion, nor reason, nor understanding ; He is neither word nor thought, and He can be neither named, nor understood : He is neither number, nor order, neither greatness, nor smallness, neither equality, nor inequality, neither similitude, nor dissemblance. He is not motionless, nor in motion, nor at rest. He has no power, nor is He power, or light. He does not live, He is not life, He is neither essence, nor eternity, nor time. There is not perception in Him.

“ He is not science, truth, empire, wisdom ; He is neither one, nor divinity, nor goodness... He is nothing of what is not, nothing of what is. No being can understand Him as He is, nor does He know any of the things that are as it is. There is in Him neither word, nor name, nor science ; He is neither darkness nor light, neither error nor truth. Concerning Him we must neither make absolute affirmation, nor absolute negation ; and by affirming, or denying the things that are inferior to Him, we do not thereby affirm or deny Him, because that perfect and unique cause of beings surpasses all affirmations, and He who is wholly independent and superior to all beings, surpasses all our negations.” Mystic Theology. V.

To sum up, both Christians and Adwaitins give to God endless attributes by the process of affirmation (*adhyaropa*), and then they correct the

imperfection of that imposition by negation (*apavada*).

They mean thereby that though it is right to give to God attributes taken from created beings, we must not imagine that in Him they exist in the same formality, (what would imply in God composition and limitation); hence the negation comes to correct that wrong idea: *na iti; na iti*. He is not so; there are no real attributes in Him; for in Him everything is one infinite indivisible essence. So the seven colours are contained in the white light, though not distinct; so is the point in the geometrical line; so the centre of a circle contains in perfect unity an infinite number of radiuses.

A THIRD WAY OF DEFINING GOD.

Christian Philosophers make use of a third way: the way of excellence. These three ways are inseparable, because they complete and perfect one another; so that, used together, they can lead us efficaciously to the knowledge of God's real nature, but taken separately, they are incomplete and insufficient.

We use the way of affirmation (*adhyaropa*), when we say, God is wise, etc.; the way of negation, (*apavada*) when we say, God is not wise, etc.

We use the way of excellence, when we explain the negation adding that we do not mean thereby to deny that wisdom is in God, but only to indicate that God's wisdom is infinitely above the wisdom of creatures. For in creatures wisdom is a finite

quality, while in God it is His one and indivisible essence. Hence Catholic philosophers teach that in God wisdom, goodness, etc, are not simply wisdom, and goodness, but super-wisdom, super-goodness, etc.

GOD'S SCIENCE.

We have thus far seen what is Brahman. In order to have a still better knowledge of Him we shall now deal with His science. Here Adwaita takes us to the highest summits of human speculation. Since God's nature is infinitely exalted above us, His knowledge too must be infinitely above ours, not only in extent, but also in the mode and the means.

I will consider God's science under the following three heads:

I. It is entirely subjective.

II. It is a pure act, i.e. there is no passing from potentiality to act.

III. Science in God implies no composition.

I. God's science is wholly subjective.

When I say that God's science is subjective I mean that it is independent from the world, i.e., God knows the world by knowing Himself.

For man, to know is to apprehend things as they are; things are the cause of our knowledge. Our knowledge depends on the things themselves.

But God's knowledge is not such a resultant. It is just the opposite of ours. For it is His knowledge that is the cause of things: because things exist according to the fashion He has thought them.

Therefore, as an artist who has made a statue, need not look at it in order to know it, so God knows the world independently of the world itself, as His intellect contains the archetypes of created things.

Hence the Adwaitins hold with us Christians that God's knowledge is absolutely independent and subjective: i.e. God is not in the necessity of begging His knowledge from the exterior world, but knows all by knowing Himself.

St. Thomas says: We say that God sees Himself in Himself, because He sees Himself by His essence; and He sees other things not in themselves, but in Himself; inasmuch as His Essence contains the similitudes of other things besides Himself... (187)

St. Augustine: God sees all things in Himself.
L. 83 Quest.

Sankara says: He is of the nature of non-objective consciousness. Hymn to Hari 4.

"Where an unknown object is to be known, there it is that an external source of knowledge is needed,...but as to Brahman who is Himself consciousness, no such external source of knowledge is necessary. Here knowledge of the Self is identical

with the Self and involves no consciousness of a foreign object; and therefore no external knowledge is needed. This consciousness of the Self has, unlike others, neither a rising nor a setting." Tait. Up. (S) 624.

"As to Brahman's knowledge it is like the sun's light or like the heat of fire, not distinct from Brahman's essential nature (svarupa); nay it is the very essential nature of Brahman, not dependent on any external cause, inasmuch as it is His own eternal nature." Sankara Tait. Up. 258.

"Where one sees nothing else.....understands nothing else, that is the Infinite. But where one... understands something else, that is finite." Chna. Up. 7-24-1.

"The word 'consciousness' connotes self-luminous knowledge of objects." (A) 252. Tait. Up.

"I am knowledge. I am the known. I am the knower. I am all the aids to knowledge. I am that pure sole existence bereft of knower, knowledge and known." Sankara. Svatmanirupanam.

"In his introduction to the second chapter of the Aitareya Upanishad, Sankara says that there is no change in the knowledge of the Self, in which all things exist eternally,—not, indeed, as objects distinguished from a subject, for the Self transcends this distinction,—but in perfect unity with it. Our perception is the result from the contact of our organs of knowledge with objects external to them. But *real* knowledge, as it is in the Self, is not such a

resultant. It is an eternal attribute of the Self. In reality it neither arises from the action of external objects upon the senses nor is destroyed in the absence of such action." Sankara philosophy. S. Tattvabhushan.

Sankara Tait. Up. 50 says that God knew the world even before it was created, because it existed in Him, as it were, in potency.

II.—God's knowledge is a pure act.

We admire Aristotle for having taught that God is a pure act. The Advaitins hold the very same doctrine. Though they didn't use the expression "pure act," they have expounded that truth in unmistakable terms, insisting strongly on God's immutability and incapacity of being "the agent of an act" i.e., the author of a temporary act.

"When we speak of God as Pure Act we mean that there is not in God any capacity or potency of being other than He is. Such capacity or potency of being other than He is would imply a defect in an infinitely perfect being, which is a contradiction in terms. It would also suppose a possibility of change in a being who is essentially immutable." Hurter, Theol.

Hence in God there is no passing from potency to act, from non-thinking to thinking, or from a thought to another thought. He is one eternal and immutable thought.

It is in this sense that the Adwaitins say "God thinks not" but is "pure thought." They mean that God thinks, but thinks not as man does. Our thought being a passing from potency to act implies a change in the thinking subject; while with God there is no change of any sort, because His thought is eternal and immutable.

Quotations from Christian Philosophers.

"As the perfections flowing from God to creatures exist in a higher state in God Himself, whenever a name taken from any created perfection is attributed to God, it ought to be separated in its signification from every thing that belongs to that imperfect mode proper to creatures. Hence knowledge is not a quality in God nor a habit, but Substance and Pure Act.....To understand is not the imperfect act passing from one to another; but is a perfect act existing in the agent itself." St. Thomas 180...132.

"In God knowledge is neither an accident nor a quality. To know and to be is for God one and the same thing." St. Augustine. De Trin. xv.

"In God's knowledge we must not see any act but only knowledge." Suarez. De Deo.

"God's being is understanding. But God's existence is His Substance. Therefore God's Intellect is His Substance,.....If it were not His Substance, then something else would be the act and perfection of the Divine Substance; to which the Divine Substance would be related, as potentiality is to act;

which is altogether impossible.....It necessarily follows that His act of understanding Itself must be His Essence and His Existence." St. Thomas. 185.

Adwaita Philosophers.

"Here the word 'jnana' means 'knowledge' itself but not 'that which knows.' How can Brahman be *Sat* i.e., immutable existence and infinite, while undergoing change as the agent of the act of knowing? The expression 'Brahman is Consciousness' serves to dispel the notion that Brahman is an agent or any other factor of an action, as also the notion that He is like clay etc., an insentient thing. His knowledge is not what is connoted by the root (namely, the temporary act of knowing) inasmuch as He is immutable. And for the same reason Brahman is not the agent of the act of knowing." Sankara. Tait. Up.

"When *pratibodhaviditam* is interpreted as 'known by the characteristic act of knowing,' on the supposition that Brahman is the agent of the act of knowing.....the Self becomes a mere substance possessing the faculty of knowing and not knowledge itself. When knowledge appears, the Self becomes distinguishable by the act of knowing; when knowledge disappears, then, being dissociated from knowing, it becomes a mere substance. Hence it will (in this view) be impossible to get over the objection that Brahman is changeable, composed of parts, impure and so on." Sankara. Ken. Up. 4.

"The objection that to Brahman all-knowingness in its primary sense cannot be ascribed

because, if the activity of cognition were permanent, Brahman could not be considered as independent with regard to it, we refute as follows. In what way, we ask the Sankya, is Brahman all-knowingness interfered with by a permanent cognitional activity? To maintain that He who possesses eternal knowledge capable of throwing light on all objects, is not all-knowing, is contradictory. If His knowledge were considered non-permanent, He would know sometimes, and sometimes He would not know; from which it would follow indeed that He is not all-knowing. This fault is however avoided if we admit Brahman's knowledge to be permanent."--Sankara. V. Sutras. 50.

I will quote another passage of Sankara showing that in God there cannot be any transient act, and therefore His knowledge must be pure act.

"The Self cannot be the abode of any action. For an action cannot exist without modifying that in which it abides. But if the Self were modified by an action its non-eternality would result therefrom, and texts such as the following—'unchangeable He is called'—would thus be stultified; an altogether unacceptable result. Hence it is impossible to assume that any action should abide in the Self."—V. Sutras. 33.

III. Knowledge in God implies no Composition.

Christian and Adwaita philosophy take us to a still higher metaphysical plane.

Both, conscious that supreme perfection and infinitude exclude composition and number, they sternly hold that even in connection with knowledge there cannot be any multiplicity in Him who is essentially one simple undivided essence. (akhanda eka rasa).

In any act of knowledge either human or divine, we have at least three things: the intellect, the act of understanding and the object of the intellect.

In finite creatures these three things are distinct, it is evident. And it would at first sight appear that we should admit this kind of composition even in God.

But Adwaitins as well as Christians hold that God's simplicity and perfection does not admit of such composition.

Christian Philosophers.

"In God the Intellect, and the object understood, and the intelligible species and His Understanding Act are entirely one and the same. Hence when God is called intelligent, no kind of multiplicity is attached to His substance." St. Thomas 185.

Adwaita Philosophers.

"Though He is devoid of the distinction of the knower, knowledge and the known, He is nevertheless always the knower." Sankara. Hymn to Hari. 4.

“ I am knowledge. I am the known. I am the knower. I am all the aids to knowledge. I am that pure sole existence bereft of knower, knowledge and known.” Sankara. Svatmanirupanam. 126.

“ The distinction of knower, knowledge and the known does not exist in respect of the Supreme Atman. Being sole consciousness and bliss, It shines by Itself alone.”

ज्ञातृज्ञानज्ञेयभेदः परं नात्मनि विद्यते ।

चिदानन्दैकरूपत्वादीप्यते स्वयमेव तत् ॥

Sankara. Knowledge of Atman, 41.

Sankara, Anantagiri and Suresvaracharya in their commentaries on the Taitirya Upanishad, they all agree in saying that Brahman is Consciousness pure and simple, the undifferentiated unconditioned Consciousness. 242.

BRAHMAN IS UNRELATED TO ANYTHING.

We have followed the Christian and Advaita philosophers in their lofty metaphysical flights concerning God's nature. We have seen that He is the BEING *par excellence*, the perfect Being whose essence is to Be, whose act is immutable, whose thought is eternal, who is without change, whose qualities are not accidents but His one and indivisible essence, whose simplicity does not even admit of the distinction of knower, knowledge and object of knowledge, and whose science is absolutely independent.

There remains another finery to be considered, viz., God's relation to the created universe.

His absolute independence requires that He should be related to nothing else. Now the fact of His being Creator seems to imply relation to the created world, hence a change in the immutable.

St. Thomas explains at great length how this relation, real on the side of creature, is only in idea on the side of God. I quote the last part of his article.

"The term 'to the right' is not applied to a column, unless it stands as regards an animal on the right side; which relation is not really in the column, but in the animal. As God is outside the whole order of creation, and all creatures are ordered to Him, and not conversely, it is manifest that creatures are really related to God Himself whereas in God there is no real relation to creatures, but it is only in idea, inasmuch as creatures are referred to Him. Thus there is nothing to prevent these names which import relation to the creature to be predicated of God from time, not by reason of any change in Him, but by reason of the change of the creature; as a column is on the right of an animal, without change in itself, but by change in the animal." Summa XII. 7.

Adwaitins uphold the very same doctrine, though, as usual they do not expose their idea as clearly as Christian philosophers.

Sayana says :

“It should not be urged that if causality, which means association with an act, should, as the defining mark, constitute an inherent attribute of Brahman like the luminosity of the moon, it would detract from the immutability of Brahman.

“Causality, we say, pertains to Brahman through His upadhi, and as such, constitutes an indirect definition of Brahman. When, for instance, Devatta's house is defined as the one on which a crow is perched, this feature of being perched upon by a crow does not constitute an inherent attribute of the house, inasmuch as, on the departure of the crow, there is no idea that the house is wanting in any of its parts; so that the feature of being perched upon by the crow is a purely accidental attribute of the house and constitutes but an indirect definition of Devatta's house. So also here; causality is a feature of Brahman due to His accidental connection with the origin etc., of the universe, and constitutes but an indirect definition of Brahman.” Tait. Up. 727.

CREATION.

Christians say that both the act of creation and the existence of the world is a mystery. Creation being an act exclusively divine, its comprehension is necessarily above the reach of human limited intellect. Moreover, how can we explain the co-existence of the finite and the Infinite, since one of the terms is above our comprehension? To understand the connection of two things is it not necessary to know well both terms?

St. Thomas defines creation as follows :

“Creation is a production of a thing according to its whole substance, nothing being presupposed, whether created or uncreated.” And we Christians call it creation *ex nihilo* ; i.e., out of nothing.

Hindus have a wrong idea of what we call creation, *ex nihilo* : they think that by that expression we mean that God has used nothingness as material cause to make the world ! Whereas we simply mean that He did not make use of any pre-existing materials.

Concerning creation Christians hold the following doctrine :

I. *God did not use any pre-existing material ;*

II. *The world pre-existed in God from all eternity in an ideal form, i.e., God had in His mind the ideas or archetypes of the whole creation ; and creation is the expression, the realisation, the concrete manifestation of those archetypes.*

III. *God, though immanent in the world, remains distinct from, and transcends the whole creation. Therefore the world is not a mode of God's substance, nor an emanation in the material sense of the word.*

We will see that the tenets of the Adwaitins agree perfectly with Christian doctrine.

In the Ved. Sutras II., 1. 37, Sankara says : “Brahman is acknowledged to be the cause of the world because all attributes required in the cause

are seen to be present, Brahman being all-knowing, all-powerful, and possessing the great power of maya."

I.—God didn't use any pre-existing material.

Sankara in the Ved. Sūtras II. 1. 25, says :

"The case of Brahman is different from that of potters and similar agents. For while potters, etc., on the one side, possess the common attribute of intelligence, potters require for their work extraneous means (i.e., means lying outside their bodies) and gods do not. Hence Brahman also is assumed to require no extraneous means."

"Being only, my dear, was this in the beginning, one without a second." Kh. Up.

"In the beginning all this was Atman one only; there was nothing else blinking whatsoever. He thought, shall I send forth worlds?" Ait. Up.

"Almighty as possessed of infinite power, independent as having nothing to resort to outside Himself, by His mere will He creates, preserves and destroys all." Suresv. Dahsh. Stotra. II. 48.

II.—Creation is the concrete manifestation ad extra
(in a certain sense) of the ideal world which
is in God's mind. *(of namas and rupas, or*
sankalpas; names and forms, or ideus.)

Non-being, verily, this in the beginning was. Thence, indeed was the being born." Tait. Up. Anan. Valli. VII.

Thereupon Sankara makes the following commentary.

“Non-being means the unmanifested Brahman, as distinguished from the universe with specific names and forms manifested; it does not mean absolute non-existence. ‘This’ refers to the universe composed of specific names and forms. Prior to creation, this universe was Brahman Himself, here spoken of as “Non-being.” Then, from that Non-being, was born the being, with specific names and forms distinctly marked.”

III. “Another scriptural passage, also,—now all this was then undeveloped (Bri. Up.)—shows that this developed world with its distinction of names and forms, is capable of being termed undeveloped in so far as in a former condition it was in a merely seminal or potential state, devoid of the later evolved distinctions of name and form.” Sankara. Ved. Sut. 242.

“This undeveloped principle is sometimes denoted by the term *akasa*, ether, sometimes again it is denoted by the term *akshara*, the imperishable, sometimes it is spoken of as *maya*, illusion, so for instance (Sve. Up. NN. IV. 10), “Know then *prakriti* is *maya*, and the great Lord He who is affected with *maya*.” (Sankara Ved. Sutras 243.)

“He displays by His own will this universe, undifferentiated in the beginning like the plant within the seed, but made afterwards picturesque in all its variety in combination with space and time created by *maya*.” (Daksh. Stotra. II.)

Commenting upon this passage Suresvaracharya says :

“ All the principles (of nature) thus assumed existed in the Atman before, as a plant in the seed. By maya, acting in the form of will, intelligence and activity, have they been displayed.”

“ His will takes the following form, ‘ I will create akasa.’ His idea is the thought ‘ let akasa (of the said description) come into being.’ ”

“ There arise in the Supreme Lord a desire to create and an idea of the things that are to be evolved in the creation. The things that are to be evolved come into being just in accordance with the will and idea of the lord. Accordingly, the Paramatman is described in the sruti as ‘ One whose desires are true, whose ideas are true.’ Such being the case, all things come into being one after another exactly as He thinks of them.” (Sayana Tait. Up. 306. 307.)

Christian Philosophers.

St. Augustine says : “ Ideas are principal forms, or permanent and immutable types of things, they themselves not being formed. Thus they are eternal, and existing always in the same manner, as being contained in the Divine Intelligence. Whilst, however, they themselves neither come into being nor decay, yet we say that in accordance with them everything is formed that can arise or decay, and all that actually does so.” (In Sum. Theol. of St. Thomas.)

The likeness of the house pre-exists in the mind of the builder. And this likeness may be called the idea of the house, since the builder intends to build his house like to the form conceived in his mind. As then the world was not made by chance, there must exist in the Divine mind that form to the likeness of which the world was made. And in this the notion of an idea consists.....

Wherefore it is evident that both Adwaitins and Christian philosophers contend that the universe pre-existed in God's mind before creation, in an undifferentiated form, viz., it was not distinct from God, it was God Himself.

St. Anselm says: "Creatures before being drawn out of nothingness, were not mere nothingness, since they existed already in the divine intellect, which had their idea or archetype." (Monologium IX.)

This idea is finely emphasized and worked out by the Adwaitins, who teach that the coming unto being of a thing altogether new is impossible. Creation, or birth, or origin of a thing are only a new form of a being already existent; or the concrete realisation of the eternal ideas.

III. Though immanent in the world, God remains distinct from, and transcends the whole creation. Therefore the world is not a mode of God's substance, nor an emanation in the strict sense of the word.

Sankara in the Ved. Sut. pag. 352, says: "Though Brahman is the basis of this entire apparent world with its changes, and so on, in its true

nature, He at the same time remains unchanged, lifted above the phenomenal universe."

To avoid repetitions I refer the reader to the paragraph "Brahman is personal," wherein it is proved that He is distinct from the universe.

NATURE OF THIS EVOLUTION OF THE WORLD FROM GOD.

I have said that both Christian and Advaita philosophers hold creation to be a mystery. Yet they have made an attempt to explain it as far as it can be explained, saying that it consists in the evolution of the ideal world contained in God's intellect.

The Advaitins express it by the terms *evolution*, *manifestation*, projection, reflection.

Catholic philosophers use the same language. They say that creation is an emanation, an evolution, an irradiation, a manifestation, from God: or a participation to, a communication of His perfections. They use also another term, which I should think shows better the nature of that evolution. It is, they say, a distant imitation of God's perfections. Thus speaks St. Thomas.

While thus teaching the evolution of the world from God, both Advaitins and Christians maintain that God remains absolutely immutable.

The Adwaitins hold Brahman to be Kutashta, immutable, Nirvikara, incapable of modification.

“Indeed, Brahman being without parts, it cannot be that He actually becomes manifold. Wherefore it is only in a figurative sense that Brahman is spoken of as becoming manifold.” (Suresv. Tait. Up. 520.)

“Brahman becomes the basis of the entire apparent world with its changes, and so on, while in His true and real nature He at the same time remains unchanged, lifted above the phenomenal universe.” (Sankara Tait. Up. 352.)

Again in the Bhagavad-Gita, (XIII. 13) Sankara says that all multiplicity attributed to Brahman is to be taken as “a figure of speech.”

“We have to condemn that theory also which says that the production, etc., of an effect, are only different states of the cause itself.” (Sankara. Bhag. Gita 436)

“Brahman does not undergo increase or diminution and is therefore inexhaustible.” (Ibid. II. 17).

It is therefore evident that the Adwaitins agree with Catholic philosophers when they say that the evolution of the world from Brahman is to be taken in a figurative sense. For they mean thereby that such evolution should not be understood in a material sense, but in a metaphysical sense only: i.e. as taking place in a manner befitting

God's spiritual and immutable nature. Wherefore there is no room for a physical emanation, and hence Adwaita cannot be charged with teaching materialistic pantheism.

ATMAN.

Some of my Christian readers may object that the Adwaitins hold Brahman to be the soul of the world, its informing spirit, or its substratum; or the world to be a mode of Brahman.

No, very far from it is the doctrine of Adwaita.

The Brahman of Adwaita cannot be the soul of the world in the Christian sense, so much "lifted, He is said to be, above the phenomenal world," -- so "pure and untouched by the effect (creation)," -- so far away distant in His solitude (*kevalatva*), -- so much unrelated to anything whatsoever!

Nor can Brahman be the substratum of the universe as substance is the substratum of qualities or accidents.

How could He be? His simplicity or oneness (*akhandā eka rasa*) is so transcendent, that it cannot even be the substratum of the most metaphysical attributes! We have seen that it does not even admit of the attribute of reality!

Brahman is said to be the Atman of the world only in the sense that He keeps the world in existence by His sustaining power: that He is its base, its support.

It is equally wrong to consider the world as a mode of Brahman because Brahman is absolutely immutable, (*kutashta*), incapable of increase or diminution, or of any change (*nirvikara*), and because Advaita teaches that Brahman and the world are as different as light and darkness.

SOME APPARENT CONTRADICTIONS EXPLAINED AWAY.

We find many contradictory expressions in Advaita concerning Brahman, the world and their relations. But the antinomies are only apparent. When the antinomies refer to Brahman they are but the well-known and excellent method of defining God followed both by Christian and Indian metaphysicians: the method of affirmations and negations—*adhyaropa* and *apavada*.

I. *Brahman is knowable and not knowable.*

Thereby it is meant that, though we know much concerning His nature, the Infinite being inexhaustible, our finite intellect cannot comprehend Him or know Him perfectly.

II. *Brahman is saguna and nirguna*, (has attributes and has no attributes)

Ancient Christian philosophers too called God *panonumon* and *anomonon*, having all names, all attributes, and having no name, no attribute. This means that, though numberless attributes may be rightly applied to God, we must not imagine that He is made up of multiple qualities, for His

essence is not composed of parts, or of anything accidental; and that no name can express Him adequately.

III. *Brahman thinks and thinks not.*

We find the same expressions in Christian works, for instance in Denis the Pseudo-Areopagite.

The sense is that God is not the agent of a temporary act. God thinks not as man thinks, passing from potency to act, from the non-thinking to the thinking, from one thought to another thought. God thinks as He alone thinks, i.e. He has only one single, eternal and immutable thought.

IV. *Brahman is real and not real, (sat and asat).*

When the Adwaitins say that Brahman is real they mean a self-existent and immutable reality. When they say that Brahman is asat, non-real, they mean that He is not real as the world is, because He is above the reality of the universe.

He is REAL as He alone is REAL. He is NON-real (A-sat) because He is REAL (SAT).

V. *The world is neither real nor unreal, (neither sat nor asat).* It is thereby meant that the world not being self-existent and immutable as Brahman, it is not REAL. Yet it is not unreal like a dream or mirage; it is simply real.

VI. *The world is real, and non-real, (sat and asat).* The world is said to be real when compared

to mirage, and it is said to be un-REAL when we compare it to God, the Supreme, Independent, immutable REALITY. The world is *sat*, but *a-SAT*, for it is not SAT as Brahman.

VII. *The universe emanates from Brahman and does not emanate.* Though the created universe comes from Brahman, since "Brahman is absolutely immutable and incapable of increase," there cannot be any physical emanation of His essence, in other terms Brahman didn't actually become this material universe. The evolution of the *world* from Brahman is to be understood as taking place in a manner consentaneous with His immutability, i.e. it is question of emanation in a metaphysical sense only.

VIII. *The world is Brahman and is not Brahman.* As whatever the universe has of reality, truth and beauty comes from Brahman and not from another source, and as before creation the world was in potency in Brahman's intellect as the palace is in the mind of the architect, in this sense it is but right to maintain the Brahmanhood of the world. Furthermore this expression is legitimated by the fact that the Adwaitins have in view the doctrine of a self-existent world upheld by the Sankyas and the Vaiseshikas.

But in other places the Adwaitins say that the world is not Brahman. Yet there is no contradiction. Thereby they mean that the Brahmanhood of the world is not to be taken in a material sense, but in the high metaphysical sense explained above.

Christian philosophers use the very same language. St. Gregory of Naziance says :

“ In Thee all things rest and to Thee they all rush impetuously.

“ Thou art the goal of all things ; Thou alone art ; Thou art all and none of the things that are ; since Thou art neither one of them nor all, how shall I call Thee, who alone art without name and hast all names ? ”

“ In Te omnia permanent ad Te confestim festinant omnia, Tu omnium finis, Tu unus, et omnia et nihil rerum.

“ Cum neque unum sis, neque omnia, quem Te appellem,

“ Qui es solus innominabilis et omninomius ? ”.

Moreover we have seen already that Denis says that the world is *divine*.

MAN'S KINSHIP WITH NATURE.

As the whole created world comes from the same source, and remains united with its efficient cause, its support, evidently we must admit a certain brotherhood between man and his fellow-creatures.

For though there is, between the various creatures, enough diversity to constitute separate entities, there is also enough community of nature and origin to justify the statement that there is kinship amongst them.

The Bible, as well as Christian philosophers and mystics, is unanimous in upholding this kinship of nature with man.

“O ye heavens, bless the Lord ; praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

O all ye waters, that are above the heavens, bless the Lord ; praise and exalt Him above all for ever

O ye sun and moon, bless the Lord ; praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

O ye stars of heaven, bless the Lord ; praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

O every shower and dew, bless the Lord ; praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

O all ye spirits of God, bless the Lord ; praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

O ye fire and heat, bless the Lord ; praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

O ye cold and heat, bless the Lord ; praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

O ye dews and hoar frost, bless the Lord ; praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

O ye frost and cold, bless the Lord ; praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

O ye ice and snow, bless the Lord ; praise and exalt Him above all for ever.

O ye nights and days,

O ye light and darkness,

O ye lightnings and clouds,
O ye mountains and hills,
O all ye that spring up in the earth,
O ye fountains,
O ye seas and rivers,
O ye whales and all that move in the water,
O all ye fowls of the air,
O all ye beasts and cattles,
O ye sons of men,

“bless the Lord ; praise and exalt Him above all for ever.” (The Bible, Daniel. 3. 57.)

The whole Christian clergy recite this Hymn at least once a day.

Let me quote “ *The Hymn of Creation*,” called also the Hymn of the Sun, of St. Francis of Assisi, the great Christian mystic who called the wolf his brother and the dove his sister :

Most High, Almighty, Good Lord,
To Thee praise, glory, honour and all blessing.
To Thee alone they are due, O Most High,
Whom no man is worthy to name.
Be Thou praised, O Lord, for all creatures.
Specially for our brother the sun
Which dispenses the light of the day.
It is beautiful and radiant of splendour ;
Of thy greatness, O Most High, it is the symbol.
Be Thou blessed, O Lord, for our sister the moon
and the stars.

In the firmament Thou hast made them bright,
precious and beautiful.

Be Thou praised for our brother the wind,

For the air and the clouds, the pure sky and all
time,

Whereby Thou givest to all creatures life and
support.

Be Thou praised, O Lord, for our sister the
water

Which is so useful, humble, precious and chaste.

Be Thou blessed, O Lord, for our brother the
fire

Whereby Thou illuminest the night:

It is beautiful and joy-giving, powerful and
strong.

Be Thou blessed, O Lord, for our mother the
earth,

Which supports us and nourishes;

It offers us its fruits, its flowers of thousand
hues and its green

Praise and bless the Lord, thank Him

And serve Him with great humility.

Once a year, to remind man of the shortness of
life and of his kinship with nature, in all the
Catholic churches the priest imposes ashes on the
head of the faithful saying: "Remember, O man,
that thou art dust and into dust thou shalt
return."

Hence it is evident that the Hindus are greatly mistaken in thinking that the tenet of brotherhood of man with nature is exclusively theirs. Dr. Rabindranath Tagore in *Sadhana* says: "In the West the prevalent feeling is that nature belongs exclusively to inanimate things and to beasts, that there is a sudden unaccountable break where human nature begins. According to it, everything that is low in the scale of beings is merely nature, and whatever has the stamp of perfection on it, intellectual or moral, is human nature.....But the Indian mind never has any hesitation in acknowledging its kinship with nature, its unbroken relation with all."

"India put all her emphasis on the harmony that exists between the individual and the universal. She felt that we could have no communication whatever with our surroundings if they were absolutely foreign to us." But.....what about untouchability?

OTHER INSTANCES OF IDENTITY OF LANGUAGE USED BY ADWAITINS AND CATHOLIC PHILOSOPHERS.

God's solitude.

Advaitins.—Brahman is isolated, (kevala).

Christians.—"Between the creature and God there is an infinite distance; not of place but of nature and degree. The mystics call this the solitude of God." (Lessius. *The Names of God.* 26.)

God enters the universe.

Adwaitins.—"Having emanated the universe, what did He do?" In answer the sruti says: "Into that very universe which was created, He then entered." Sankara. Tait. Up. 525.

Christians.—"Thou enterest into all things without commingling with any. Thou art not soiled by their contact, but keepest Thy splendour and purity unsullied." (Lessius. Ibid.)

God lifted above the world.

Adwaitins.—"Brahman in His true nature remains unchanged, lifted above the phenomenal (visible) world." (Sankara. V. S. 352.)

Christians.—"Thou remainest in Thy unchangeable identity fixed most firmly above all created things"....."God is infinitely exalted above them all to such a degree that He cannot be affected or touched by any created things." (Lessius. 163.)

Luminousness of things.

Adwaitins.—"We speak of things as existing and appearing. Wherein does this existence abide, as also the light by which they appear?"

"The existence and light of all phenomenal things which are insentient, momentary and almost non-existent, proceed from the eternal Isvara." (Suresv. Dakshinam. Stotra.)

"After Him alone shining, all things shine;

"By His light does all this clearly shine."

(Katha Up.)

Christians.—"Thou art hidden entirely in every being, incessantly creating all things, forming them, conserving them in all the luminousness of being; else they would fall back again into their proper darkness and nothingness" (Lessius. *ibid.*)

The world is false.

Adwaitins.—They say sometime that the world is mithya (false), and sunya (vain.)

Christians.—"What is all the rest when compared to Thy excellence? What is all else but a shadow and a vain thing?" (Lessius.)

God rests in His own glory.

Adwaitins.—"Where does He rest? In His own glory." (Kh. Up. Sankara V. S. 78.)

"He abides in His own greatness." Ch. Up. (Tait. Up. 596.)

Christians.—"He, by His own power, reigns for ever seated on the glorious and peaceful throne of His incomparable immutability." (Denis. The Names of God.)

God is Light.

Adwaitins.—"Him the gods worship as the Light of lights, the immortal." (Brih. Up. Sankara, V. S. 91.)

Christians.—"God is light and in Him there is no darkness." (Bible. I. John.)

"God is called the Light because He is the source of corporeal and spiritual light, of all knowledge. Scripture tells us that He dwells in light inaccessible, because by knowledge, love and possession He dwells in Himself and is essentially Light Inaccessible which no creature by the mere force of nature can ever attain to, even in thought." (Lessius 94.)

Creation a picture.

Advaitins.—"On the vast canvas of Atman, Atman itself paints the picture of the various worlds and the Supreme Atman derives extreme bliss from seeing that picture." (Sankara, Svāt. Nirup.)

Christians.—"What we contemplate directly is the portrait of Him painted, so to speak, by Himself on the canvas of the universe and exhibiting in an infinite degree various perfections. (New York Cath. Encycl. VI-613.)

Creation a reflection.

Advaitins.—They say sometimes that creation is a *basa* (reflection.)

Christians.—"As from one face many likenesses are reflected in a mirror, so many truths are reflected from the Divine Truth." (St. Aug. on Ps. XI. 2.)

Brahman becoming many by creating.

"He desired: many may I become, may I be born" (Tait. Up.)

सोऽकामयत् । बहु स्यां प्रजायेयेति ॥

Our Denis says :

“By His calling the beings to His participation and by His letting overflow upon them the torrent of His benefits, the Deity becomes something separable, multiple, many in its works, but without prejudice to Its indivisibility, without losing Its simplicity, without forfeiting Its oneness.

“Thus, because from the bosom of His adorable Unity, God bestows the existences and creates all beings, we say that this sublime Unity multiplies itself into those various beings which it produces ; and yet, in the midst of that multiplicity, that production, that distinction of all things, He remains identical, unalterable, indivisible, because He is eminently superior to all.”

The Names of God, II, 11.

ADWAITA AND BUDDHISM.

I will show how mistaken are the opinions of the orientalist and the Indian scholars concerning the relations between Adwaita and Buddhism.

In his work published last year at Paris, “*Histoire de la philosophie orientale*,” René Grousset says :

“Vedanta has triumphed over Buddhism, by borrowing a part of its conceptions, by absorbing it unconsciously : the system mayavadin of Sankara is it not on certain respects as an orthodox transposition of the yogakara idealism and even of the illusionism of the sunyavadin ?”

S. Radhakrishnam, Professor of Philosophy at the Calcutta University, speaks as follows :

“ We have in the philosophical synthesis left by Sankara a characteristic attempt to combine the central principles of Buddhism and those of the Vedanta religion in one whole.....Buddhism holds emancipation from the world to be the supreme end of man. Sankara, without touching the root-principles of Vedantism, grafted on to it the Buddhistic principles of maya and monasticism. The Buddhists spoke of the flux of the finite universe, and Sankara admits the world is maya. The anxiety to be loyal as far as possible to both Buddhism and Vedantism appears to be the explanation of much of the inconsistency of Sankara's philosophy.....There is no denying that the positive method Sankara intends to pursue as a Vedantin and the negative method he does sometimes pursue as an interpreter of Buddhism, end in conflict and contradiction.” (The philosophy of Rabindranath Tagore.)

The attentive reader has no doubt already realised that all this alleged absorption of Buddhism by Adwaita rests on the wrong interpretation of Adwaita. There has been no compromise whatever between them ; for Adwaita has nothing common with Buddhism ; it is war to the knife between them.

1. Adwaita didn't borrow from Buddhism its idealism, since Adwaita has rejected it unconditionally.

II. Nor did Adwaita borrow its psychology, since the Buddhists deny the existence of the soul.

III. Nor the doctrine of illusion, since the Adwaita's maya is altogether a different thing.

IV. Nor the doctrine of the relative reality of the world, since the Buddhists hold the world to be mere illusion.

V. Lastly, not even the Buddhistic nirvana, since the Adwaita's samadhi consists in the supposed attainment of the identity with Brahman, and thereby of the consciousness of oneself and of all things: while the Buddhistic nirvana consists in losing consciousness of oneself and of everything.

Wherefore it is evident that, not only Adwaita didn't absorb Buddhism, but is its greatest foe. Adwaita has had the merit of impugning and refuting many gross errors of Buddhism.

[Here ends Adwaita philosophy. What follows pertains to religion.]

THE ERRORS OF ADWAITA COME CHIEFLY FROM RELIGION.

It is not my intention to expatiate on the errors of this system. I will only mention the principal ones.

The great fundamental error of Adwaita is the doctrine that Jiva (the human soul) and Brahman are one and the same thing.

This tenet is not a find of philosophy. Sankara gives it as revealed truth. It is a great pity that

he should have impaired his fine system by borrowing this doctrine from an alleged revelation. With this error are connected many others, viz. the theories of samsara, rebirth, karma, maya (in a particular sense), para vidya attributed to the human soul.

It is in this doctrine of the identity of Jiva and Brahman that lies the difficulty in understanding Adwaita.

As to the belief in transmigration, it is a matter of surprise that we should find it amongst cultured peoples like the Egyptians and the Indians and at the same time also amongst the cannibals of Africa and Australasia:

Adwaita remains a complete system without jiva. For jiva is an unnecessary factor in the making up of man. Adwaita provides for another psychology. In fact buddhi or manas is an intellectual factor that can fulfil all the functions attributed to the human soul by Christians, Manu, Bahmati, the Saivas, Ramanuja, Maddhva, in one word by the vast majority of the Hindus who hold human soul to be distinct from God.

I must mention also the erroneous idea concerning the purpose of creation, and the admission of numberless devas unworthy of worship which are nothing else but fictions of poets.

Take, for instance, the most popular of the devas, Ganesa, a god half-man and half-elephant. One feels very sad in seeing that men who had

such lofty conceptions of the Supreme Being, should have stooped to the worship of that fictitious and unesthetic being.

One experiences the same feelings in witnessing the belief in alleged incarnations unworthy of God.

But it is refreshing to notice that nowadays very few amongst the educated classes still believe in the Hindu mythology and in the identity of jiva and Brahman. This happy change is due chiefly to Christian influence and to the laudable campaign of the Brahma Samaj.

Concerning the Adwaita assumption of the identity of jiva and Brahman, I can't help making a few remarks.

I. It is anti-patriotic. For, if there be only one universal Atman, there is no room for the Foreigner !

II. The difference between man and Brahman is so great that some people believe in God, while others deny His existence : some love God, others curse Him !

III. That belief coupled with the misunderstood doctrine of Maya, leads to utter intellectual confusion, scepticism and despair. Let us hear Swami Vivekananda, a believer in that doctrine :

“ Dear, such is life ; grind, grind : and yet what else are we to do ; grind, grind ! something will come, some way will be opened. If it does

not, as it would probably never, then -- what then ?

“ All our efforts are only to stave off the great climax, for a season. Death ! Oh what would the world do without thee, Death ! thou great healer !...

“ Dream, oh dream ! Dream on !

“ Dream, dream, only dream ! Kill dream by dream !

“ Talk to all the world of the eternal riddle, the eternal spool of fate, whose thread-end no one finds and every one seems to find, at least to his own satisfaction, -- at least for a time to fool himself a moment, is it ?

“ We play our parts here, good or bad. When the dream is finished and we have left the stage, we will have a hearty laugh at all this : of this I am sure.” *Private Letters No. 86, Himalaya Series.*

“ Bhakti ! Indeed ! I wish I could be an Adwaitist calm and heartless. The peace, the quiet I am seeking, I never found. It is my weak heart that has driven me out of India to seek some help for those I love, and here I am ! Peace have I sought, but the heart, that seat of bhakti, would not allow me to find it. Struggle and torture, torture and struggle !”

Letter 78, ibidem.

IV. If the human soul, jiva, is Brahman Himself, every man is an incarnation. an avatara of the Deity.

On the other hand the Adwaitins believe in the incarnation of the Lord in the person of Krishna, and in other avataras.

There would be no difference between these two sorts of avataras. Moreover, man being himself an avatara, why should he bow before another avatara?

I must mention also some contradictions and difficulties which I am unable to explain away. Sankara in the Vedanta Sutas, says in a place that the series of creations are endless, and in another place he says that they have a beginning.

Concerning creation does not Sankara teach that it is the work of Brahman (Iswara)? In what does then consist the role of the creature Brahman (masculine) as creator? I suppose that he calls Brahman Creator because He had given to the deva Brahman the power to create.

THE POSSIBILITIES OF ADWAITA.

By what has been already achieved by Adwaita, it is open to us to surmise its great possibilities for the future, provided that the Indian thinkers, following the footsteps of Rammohun Roy, should throw overboard the whole overgrowth of the Puranas, viz. all the devas, the alleged incarnations as well as the blasphemous doctrine of the identity of jiva and Brahman.

On this condition only, shall the subtle Indian mind be able to soar freely to the high planes of metaphysics and obtain the best results.

Moreover, it is necessary that the Adwaitins should study the great Catholic philosophers. If Adwaita follows its elder sister the Catholic philosophy, it won't go astray, and will certainly cooperate with her in casting a still greater light in the field of metaphysics.

I am very glad that it has been my privilege to discover and vindicate the value of Adwaita and to smooth the way to the long desired reconciliation with the Catholic thought.

The best intelligences of India are pining after the recognition of Vedanta. They feel that there must be in it something good which should be recognised.

Dr. Rabindranath Tagore has said :

“The ideal of every man should be the union of East and West.”

And Pandit Sitantha Tattva Bhushan :

“As to Christianity, appearances point to a not very distant fusion of the most liberal form of this faith with the most advanced and reformed forms of Vedantism, a fusion far more glorious and fruitful than that of neoplatonism and Christianity in the early centuries of Christian era.”

(Aspects of the Vedanta.)

THE NONSENSSES ATTRIBUTED TO ADWAITA.

Most of the errors attributed to Adwaita by Western scholars are due to their utter ignorance of the metaphysics of Catholic philosophy.

In order that the reader may better realise the service I have rendered to the cause of Adwaita and of philosophy at large I will quote some passages from one of the publications of the "Christian Literature Society" of Madras and London.

I won't make any commentary on those quotations, because they have been already triumphantly refuted in the course of my work by the mere exposition of the genuine doctrine of Adwaita.

I must say that the modern Adwaitins need not, in this connection, throw the stone at the Western scholars and the Missionaries, because they themselves are not able to explain their system.

Adwaita was a lost wisdom! I could give striking evidences.

But let us come to the quotations.

Concerning Brahman.—

"The general confession is that Brahman is unknowable. The Brahmavadin says:

The fundamental doctrine of agnosticism, that God is inaccessible to human thoughts and words, is also accepted by the Vedanta, and is in entire accord with the general view of its theology.

Reason can describe the Lord only as "na iti, na iti; as no, no," Vol. II. 65.

"Brahman is Impersonal.....The chief idea is that Brahman is not conscious of Its own existence. Hindu philosophers generally think this a higher state than the opposite. Deussen says that we should not think so low of God as to impute to Him personality."

Existence in a dreamless sleep may be the highest ideal of the Supreme Deity with persons who regard existence as a curse, but not with others.

Pantheism, says Flint, under pretence of exalting God above all categories of thought and existence, reduces Him to the level of dead things, of necessary processes, of abstract ideas, or even to the still lower level of the unknowable and non-existent.

The term "sat" denotes simple existence. Upon this the late Ramachandra Bose remarks :

"God (Brahma) is the Pure Being of some schools of Greek philosophy, but as according to no less a philosopher than Hegel, Pure Being equals nothing, He is a non-entity. Ancient philosophy laboured, not only in India, but in all famous centres of speculative thought, to reduce God to nothing; and such phrases as the 'Eternal Void,' the 'Everlasting Night', etc., were most ingeniously invented to set forth His real nothingness under a cloud of

high-sounding words. And modern philosophers are simply following their example in their attempts to maintain the nothingness of God behind an array of imposing technicalities. According to them, God is the Absolute, and the Unconditioned. If these technical expressions mean anything, they represent God as pure Being and nothing more, that subtle unpalpable nonentity which defies every attempt to determine it or give it some definite shape."

Chit. Intelligence, Gough thus explains the term :

"If we are to use the language of European philosophy, we must pronounce the Brahman of the Upanishads to be unconscious, for consciousness begins where duality begins."

Nehemiah Goreh says: The so-called knowledge of Brahman is nirvishaya, objectless, that is, it is not a knowledge of anything, and is therefore no knowledge at all.

Dr. Murray Mitchell says that the Vedanta doctrine on this point is self-contradictory :

"Where knowledge exists, there must be a knower, and also something known, knowledge being the relation between the two. But the Vedanta explicitly denies that there is such a distinction."

Brahma is said to exist in two conditions—nirguna, (unbound), and saguna, (bound). The two

states are sometimes called the Higher and Lower Brahma. The former is called Brahma, neuter ; the latter Brahmâ, masculine. The name Isvara, Lord, is also often applied to the latter.

Brahma nirguna exists in a state of dreamless sleep, unconscious of its own existence.

R. C. Bose says :

Brahma is...without consciousness, without feelings, without attributes.....The representations by which he is set forth as conditioned and related, determined by qualities, states and acts, are all false, knowingly resorted to by the learned for the purpose of making the absolute intelligible to the unlearned.

Isvara, in reality, is a non-entîty. Nehemiah Goreh says :

The Vedanta recognises as existent an Isvara, maker of the world, all-wise and all-powerful ; and souls, etc...And again, all these are regarded as non-existent, and as absolutely so. Neither are they, nor have they been, nor are they to be.

Concerning the reality of the world.—

The whole universe is a gigantic lie, and the Liar is the Supreme Brahma.

To the above Dr. Mohun Banerjea replies :

“You say that the world is maya, an illusion and that God is the mayi, the conjurer who thus deceives you. Is it not grossly revolting to our moral

feelings to say that God has deliberately projected a false appearance with a view to beguile rational minds of His own creation ?

Mr. Slater says : The God who made us, made us real ; and real we must remain for all eternity. God is real, the world is real, self is real, sin is real...

Monier Williams says :

The more evidently physical and metaphysical speculations are opposed to common sense, the more favour do they find with some Hindu thinkers. Common sense tells an Englishman that he really exists himself and that everything he sees around him really exist also. He cannot abandon these two primary convictions. Not so the Hindu Vedantist.

CONCLUSION.

Perhaps I should apologize for having rather rudely pulled down Prof. Deussen from his high pedestal.

By doing away with his hitherto accepted but, to say the least, incredible theory of two self-contradictory systems, the one false for people who do not care for philosophy, the other true for the philosophers,—viz. realism and idealism, evolution and non-evolution, creation and non-creation, a knowable Brahman and an unknowable Brahman,—and by explaining away these apparent antinomies, I have proved that Adwaita teaches only one

system; a well-conceived, rational, self-consistent system which, with the exception of psychology, agrees splendidly with Catholic philosophy.

I have thereby taken away a part of the ground from western Pantheism and Theosophy, at the same time strengthened the position of Catholic philosophy with a valuable support, and brought the distant East nearer to the West; for, a bridge has been thrown over the chasm.

In this work I have duly extolled the lofty knowledge the ancient philosophers of India had of the Supreme Being.

But there remains something more to know about Brahman that Adwaita didn't teach. It was reserved to Christian revelation to give us a still deeper knowledge of Para Brahman.

This higher knowledge of Brahman I will expose in a pamphlet which is under preparation and will appear very soon.

The title will be :

ADHIHI BHAGAVO BRAHMA.—
(*Sir, teach me Brahman.*)



VOCABULARY.

Brahman or *Brahma*, neuter, is the Supreme Being. To oppose *Brahmâ* (masculine) as personal God, to *Brahma* (neuter) as impersonal, is a wrong interpretation.

Brahmâ, masculine, Vishnu and Siva are only creatures of Brahman; they are called *devas*, or gods. The Supreme Being is never called "deva."

The Supreme Being, Brahman, is sometimes called Vishnu or Siva, who are not to be confounded with the *devas* Vishnu and Siva.

Iscara is *Brahman* considered as Creator and Ruler of the world.

Brahman considered as the sustainer of the world is called *Atman*. There is no term in English for *Atman*. It should not be translated. Soul and Self are not appropriate terms. Wherefore when in my quotations "Self" stands for Brahman, read "Atman."

Jiva is the human soul and is supposed by the Adwaitins to be identical with Brahman.

Upadhis means limiting adjuncts, such as God's attributes considered as accidents.

Samsara is the course of wordly life, the succession of births.

Devas, gods, are creatures of Brahman and from Him they have received their power; they are numberless. As far as rank is concerned they

